SPILLING GROG ON THE "CONSTITUTION" BEFORE GOING INTO ACTION

# THE NAVAL HISTORY
OF THE
# UNITED STATES

BY
WILLIS J. ABBOT

With 150 Illustrations

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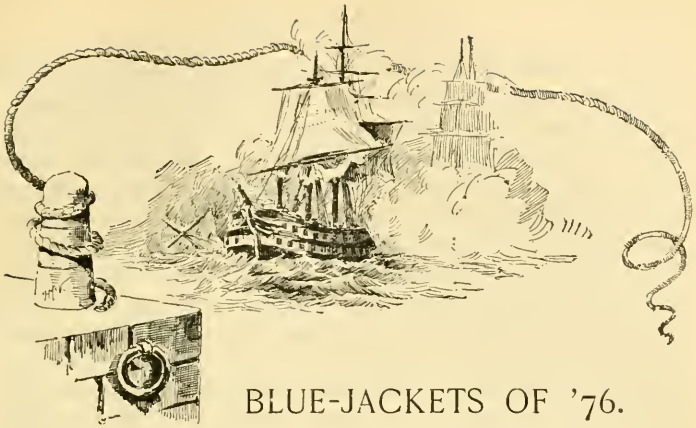
# PART I

## BLUE JACKETS OF '76



# BLUE-JACKETS OF '76.

## CHAPTER I.

EARLY EXPLOITS UPON THE WATER. — GALLOP'S BATTLE WITH THE INDIANS. — BUCCANEERS AND PIRATES. — MORGAN AND BLACKBEARD. — CAPT. KIDD TURNS PIRATE. — DOWNFALL OF THE BUCCANEERS' POWER.

IN MAY, 1636, a stanch little sloop of some twenty tons was standing along Long Island Sound on a trading expedition. At her helm stood John Gallop, a sturdy colonist, and a skilful seaman, who earned his bread by trading with the Indians that at that time thronged the shores of the Sound, and eagerly seized any opportunity to traffic with the white men from the colonies of Plymouth or New Amsterdam. The colonists sent out beads, knives, bright clothes, and sometimes, unfortunately, rum and other strong drinks. The Indians in exchange offered skins and peltries of all kinds, and, as their simple natures had not been schooled to nice calculations of values, the traffic was one of great profit to the more shrewd whites. But the trade was not without its perils. Though the Indians were simple, and little likely to drive hard bargains, yet they were savages, and little accustomed to nice distinctions between their own property

and that of others. Their desires once aroused for some gaudy bit of cloth or shining glass, they were ready enough to steal it, often making their booty secure by the murder of the luckless trader. It so happened, that, just before John Gallop set out with his sloop on the spring trading cruise, the people of the colony were excitedly discussing the probable fate of one Oldham, who some weeks before had set out on a like errand, in a pinnace, with a crew of two white boys and two Indians, and had never returned. So when, on this May morning, Gallop, being forced to hug the shore by stormy weather, saw a small vessel lying at anchor in a cove, he immediately ran down nearer, to investigate. The crew of the sloop numbered two men and two boys, beside the skipper, Gallop. Some heavy duck-guns on board were no mean ordnance; and the New Englander determined to probe the mystery of Oldham's disappearance, though it might require some fighting. As the sloop bore down upon the anchored pinnace, Gallop found no lack of signs to arouse his suspicion. The rigging of the strange craft was loose, and seemed to have been cut. No lookout was visible, and she seemed to have been deserted; but a nearer view showed, lying on the deck of the pinnace, fourteen stalwart Indians, one of whom, catching sight of the approaching sloop, cut the anchor cable, and called to his companions to awake.

This action on the part of the Indians left Gallop no doubt as to their character. Evidently they had captured the pinnace, and had either murdered Oldham, or even then had him a prisoner in their midst. The daring sailor wasted no time in debate as to the proper course to pursue, but clapping all sail on his craft, soon brought her alongside the pinnace. As the sloop came up, the Indians opened the fight with fire-arms and spears; but Gallop's crew responded with their duck-guns with such vigor that the Indians deserted the decks, and fled below for shelter. Gallop was then in a quandary. The odds against him were too great for him to dare to board, and the pinnace was rapidly drifting ashore. After some deliberation he put up his helm, and beat to windward of the pinnace; then, coming about, came scudding down upon her before the wind. The two vessels met with a tremendous shock. The bow of the sloop struck the pinnace fairly amidships, forcing her over on her beam-ends, until the water poured into the open hatchway. The affrighted

Indians, unused to warfare on the water, rushed upon deck. Six leaped into the sea, and were drowned; the rest retreated again into the cabin. Gallop then prepared to repeat his ramming manœuvre. This time, to make the blow more effective, he lashed his anchor to the bow, so that the sharp flukes protruded; thus extemporizing an iron-clad ram more than two hundred years before naval men thought of using one. Thus provided, the second blow of the sloop was more terrible than the first. The sharp fluke of the anchor crashed through the side of the pinnace, and the two vessels hung tightly together. Gallop then began to double-load his duck-guns, and fire through the sides of the pinnace; but, finding that the enemy was not to be dislodged in this way, he broke his vessel loose, and again made for the windward, preparatory to a third blow. As the sloop drew off, four or five more Indians rushed from the cabin of the pinnace, and leaped overboard, but shared the fate of their predecessors, being far from land. Gallop then came about, and for the third time bore down upon his adversary. As he drew near, an Indian appeared on the deck of the pinnace, and with humble gestures offered to submit. Gallop ran alongside, and taking the man on board, bound him hand and foot, and placed him in the hold. A second redskin then begged for quarter; but Gallop, fearing to allow the two wily savages to be together, cast the second into the sea, where he was drowned. Gallop then boarded the pinnace. Two Indians were left, who retreated into a small compartment of the hold, and were left unmolested. In the cabin was found the mangled body of Mr. Oldham. A tomahawk had been sunk deep into his skull, and his body was covered with wounds. The floor of the cabin was littered with portions of the cargo, which the murderous savages had plundered. Taking all that remained of value upon his own craft, Gallop cut loose the pinnace; and she drifted away, to go to pieces on a reef in Narragansett Bay.

This combat is the earliest action upon American waters of which we have any trustworthy records. The only naval event antedating this was the expedition from Virginia, under Capt. Samuel Argal, against the little French settlement of San Sauveur. Indeed, had it not been for the pirates and the neighboring French settlements, there would be little in the early history of the American Colonies to attract the lover of

naval history. But about 1645 the buccaneers began to commit depredations on the high seas, and it became necessary for the Colonies to take steps for the protection of their commerce. In this year an eighteen-gun ship from Cambridge, Mass., fell in with a Barbary pirate of twenty guns, and was hard put to it to escape. And, as the seventeenth century drew near its close, these pests of the sea so increased, that evil was sure to befall the peaceful merchantman that put to sea without due preparation for a fight or two with the sea robbers.

It was in the low-lying islands of the Gulf of Mexico, that these predatory gentry — buccaneers, marooners, or pirates — made their headquarters, and lay in wait for the richly freighted merchantmen in the West India trade. Men of all nationalities sailed under the "Jolly Roger," — as the dread black flag with skull and cross-bones was called, — but chiefly were they French and Spaniards. The continual wars that in that turbulent time racked Europe gave to the marauders of the sea a specious excuse for their occupation. Thus, many a Spanish schooner, manned by a swarthy crew bent on plunder, commenced her career on the Spanish Main, with the intention of taking only ships belonging to France and England; but let a richly laden Spanish galleon appear, after a long season of ill-fortune, and all scruples were thrown aside, the "Jolly Roger" sent merrily to the fore, and another pirate was added to the list of those that made the highways of the sea as dangerous to travel as the footpad infested common of Hounslow Heath. English ships went out to hunt down the treacherous Spaniards, and stayed to rob and pillage indiscriminately; and not a few of the names now honored as those of eminent English discoverers, were once dreaded as being borne by merciless pirates.

But the most powerful of the buccaneers on the Spanish Main were French, and between them and the Spaniards an unceasing warfare was waged. There were desperate men on either side, and mighty stories are told of their deeds of valor. There were Pierre François, who, with six and twenty desperadoes, dashed into the heart of a Spanish fleet, and captured the admiral's flag-ship; Bartholomew Portuguese, who, with thirty men, made repeated attacks upon a great Indiaman with a crew of seventy, and though beaten back time and again, persisted until the crew surrendered to the twenty buccaneers left alive; François l'Olonoise, who

sacked the cities of Maracaibo and Gibraltar, and who, on hearing that a man-o'-war had been sent to drive him away, went boldly to meet her, captured her, and slaughtered all of the crew save one, whom he sent to bear the bloody tidings to the governor of Havana.

Such were the buccaneers, — desperate, merciless, and insatiate in their lust for plunder. So numerous did they finally become, that no merchant dared to send a ship to the West Indies; and the pirates, finding that they had fairly exterminated their game, were fain to turn landwards for further booty. It was an Englishman that showed the sea rovers this new plan of pillage; one Louis Scott, who descended upon the town of Campeche, and, after stripping the place to the bare walls, demanded that a heavy tribute be paid him, in default of which he would burn the town. Loaded with booty, he sailed back to the buccaneers' haunts in the Tortugas. This expedition was the example that the buccaneers followed for the next few years. City after city fell a prey to the demoniac attacks of the lawless rovers. Houses and churches were sacked, towns given to the flames, rich and poor plundered alike; murder was rampant; and men and women were subjected to the most horrid tortures, to extort information as to buried treasures.

Two great names stand out pre-eminent amid the host of outlaws that took part in this reign of rapine, — l'Olonoise and Sir Henry Morgan. The desperate exploits of these two worthies would, if recounted, fill volumes; and probably no more extraordinary narrative of cruelty, courage, suffering, and barbaric luxury could be fabricated. Morgan was a Welsh man, an emigrant, who, having worked out as a slave the cost of his passage across the ocean, took immediate advantage of his freedom to take up the trade of piracy. For him was no pillaging of paltry merchantships. He demanded grander operations, and his bands of desperadoes assumed the proportions of armies. Many were the towns that suffered from the bloody visitations of Morgan and his men. Puerto del Principe yielded up to them three hundred thousand pieces of eight, five hundred head of cattle, and many prisoners. Porto Bello was bravely defended against the barbarians; and the stubbornness of the defence so enraged Morgan, that he swore that no quarter should be given the defenders. And so when some hours later the chief fortress surrendered, the merciless buccaneer locked its garrison in the guard-room, set a torch to

the magazine, and sent castle and garrison flying into the air. Maracaibo and Gibraltar next fell into the clutches of the pirate. At the latter town, finding himself caught in a river with three men-of-war anchored at its mouth, he hastily built a fire-ship, put some desperate men at the helm, and sent her, a sheet of flame, into the midst of the squadron. The admiral's ship was destroyed; and the pirates sailed away, exulting over their adversaries' discomfiture. Rejoicing over their victories, the followers of Morgan then planned a venture that should eclipse all that had gone before. This was no less than a descent upon Panama, the most powerful of the West Indian cities. For this undertaking, Morgan gathered around him an army of over two thousand desperadoes of all nationalities. A little village on the island of Hispaniola was chosen as the recruiting station; and thither flocked pirates, thieves, and adventurers from all parts of the world. It was a motley crew thus gathered together, — Spaniards, swarthy skinned and black haired; wiry Frenchmen, quick to anger, and ever ready with cutlass or pistol; Malays and Lascars, half clad in gaudy colors, treacherous and sullen, with a hand ever on their glittering creeses; Englishmen, handy alike with fist, bludgeon, or cutlass, and mightily given to fearful oaths; negroes, Moors, and a few West Indians mixed with the lawless throng.

Having gathered his band, procured provisions (chiefly by plundering), and built a fleet of boats, Morgan put his forces in motion. The first obstacle in his path was the Castle of Chagres, which guarded the mouth of the Chagres River, up which the buccaneers must pass to reach the city of Panama. To capture this fortress, Morgan sent his vice-admiral Bradley, with four hundred men. The Spaniards were evidently warned of their approach; for hardly had the first ship flying the piratical ensign appeared at the mouth of the river, when the royal standard of Spain was hoisted above the castle, and the dull report of a shotted gun told the pirates that there was a stubborn resistance in store for them.

Landing some miles below the castle, and cutting their way with hatchet and sabre through the densely interwoven vegetation of a tropical jungle, the pirates at last reached a spot from which a clear view of the castle could be obtained. As they emerged from the forest to the open, the sight greatly disheartened them. They saw a powerful fort, with bastions, moat, drawbridge, and precipitous natural defences. Many

of the pirates advised a retreat; but Bradley, dreading the anger of Morgan, ordered an assault. Time after time did the desperate buccaneers, with horrid yells, rush upon the fort, only to be beaten back by the well-directed volleys of the garrison. They charged up to the very walls, threw over fireballs, and hacked the timbers with axes, but to no avail. From behind their impregnable ramparts, the Spaniards fired murderous volleys, crying out, —

"Come on, you English devils, you heretics, the enemies of God and of the king! Let your comrades who are behind come also. We will serve them as we have served you. You shall not get to Panama this time."

As night fell, the pirates withdrew into the thickets to escape the fire of their enemies, and to discuss their discomfiture. As one group of buccaneers lay in the jungle, a chance arrow, shot by an Indian in the fort, struck one of them in the arm. Springing to his feet with a cry of rage and pain, the wounded man cried out as he tore the arrow from the bleeding wound, —

"Look here, my comrades. I will make this accursed arrow the means of the destruction of all the Spaniards."

So saying, he wrapped a quantity of cotton about the head of the arrow, charged his gun with powder, and, thrusting the arrow into the muzzle, fired. His comrades eagerly watched the flight of the missile, which was easily traced by the flaming cotton. Hurtling through the air, the fiery missile fell upon a thatched roof within the castle, and the dry straw and leaves were instantly in a blaze. With cries of savage joy, the buccaneers ran about picking up the arrows that lay scattered over the battle-field. Soon the air was full of the firebrands, and the woodwork within the castle enclosure was a mass of flame. One arrow fell within the magazine; and a burst of smoke and flame, and the dull roar of an explosion, followed. The Spaniards worked valiantly to extinguish the flames, and to beat back their assailants; but the fire raged beyond their control, and the bright light made them easy targets for their foes. There could be but one issue to such a conflict. By morning the fort was in the hands of the buccaneers, and of the garrison of three hundred and fourteen only fourteen were unhurt. Over the ruins of the fort the English flag was hoisted, the shattered walls were repaired, and the place made a rendezvous for Morgan's forces.

On the scene of the battle Morgan drilled his forces, and prepared for the march and battles that were to come. After some days' preparation, the expedition set out. The road lay through tangled tropical forests, under a burning sun. Little food was taken, as the invaders expected to live on the country; but the inhabitants fled before the advancing column, destroying every thing eatable. Soon starvation stared the desperadoes in the face. They fed upon berries, roots, and leaves. As the days passed, and no food was to be found, they sliced up and devoured coarse leather bags. For a time, it seemed that they would never escape alive from the jungle; but at last, weak, weary, and emaciated, they came out upon a grassy plain before the city of Panama. Here, a few days later, a great battle was fought. The Spaniards outnumbered the invaders, and were better provided with munitions of war; yet the pirates, fighting with the bravery of desperate men, were victorious, and the city fell into their hands. Then followed days of murder, plunder, and debauchery. Morgan saw his followers, maddened by liquor, scoff at the idea of discipline and obedience. Fearing that while his men were helplessly drunk the Spaniards would rally and cut them to pieces, he set fire to the city, that the stores of rum might be destroyed. After sacking the town, the vandals packed their plunder on the backs of mules, and retraced their steps to the seaboard. Their booty amounted to over two millions of dollars. Over the division of this enormous sum great dissensions arose, and Morgan saw the mutinous spirit spreading rapidly among his men. With a few accomplices, therefore, he loaded a ship with the plunder, and secretly set sail; leaving over half of his band, without food or shelter, in a hostile country. Many of the abandoned buccaneers starved, some were shot or hanged by the enraged Spaniards; but the leader of the rapacious gang reached Jamaica with a huge fortune, and was appointed governor of the island, and made a baronet by the reigning king of England, Charles the Second.

Such were some of the exploits of some of the more notorious of the buccaneers. It may be readily imagined, that, with hordes of desperadoes such as these infesting the waters of the West Indies, there was little opportunity for the American Colonies to build up any maritime interests in that direction. And as the merchantmen became scarce on the Spanish Main, such of the buccaneers as did not turn landward in search

of booty put out to sea, and ravaged the ocean pathways between the Colonies and England. It was against these pirates, that the earliest naval operations of the Colonies were directed. Several cruisers were fitted out to rid the seas of these pests, but we hear little of their success. But the name of one officer sent against the pirates has become notorious as that of the worst villain of them all.

It was in January, 1665, that William III., King of England, issued "to our true and well-beloved Capt. William Kidd, commander of the ship 'Adventure,'" a commission to proceed against "divers wicked persons who commit many and great piracies, robberies, and depredations on the seas." Kidd was a merchant of New York, and had commanded a privateer during the last war with France. He was a man of great courage, and, being provided with a stanch ship and brave crew, set out with high hopes of winning great reputation and much prize money. But fortune was against him. For months the "Adventure" ploughed the blue waves of the ocean, yet not a sail appeared on the horizon. Once, indeed, three ships were seen in the distance. The men of the "Adventure" were overjoyed at the prospect of a rich prize, The ship was prepared for action. The men, stripped to the waist, stood at their quarters, talking of the coming battle. Kidd stood in the rigging with a spy-glass, eagerly examining the distant vessels. But only disappointment was in store; for, as the ships drew nearer, Kidd shut his spy-glass with an oath, saying, —

"They are only three English men-o'-war."

Continued disappointment bred discontent and mutiny among the crew. They had been enlisted with lavish promises of prize money, but saw before them nothing but a profitless cruise. The spirit of discontent spread rapidly. Three or four ships that were sighted proved to be neither pirates nor French, and were therefore beyond the powers of capture granted Kidd by the king. Kidd fought against the growing piratical sentiment for a long time; but temptation at last overcame him, and he yielded. Near the Straits of Babelmandeb, at the entrance to the Red Sea, he landed a party, plundered the adjoining country for provisions, and, turning his ship's prow toward the straits, mustered his crew on deck, and thus addressed them: —

"We have been unsuccessful hitherto, my boys," he said, "but take

courage. Fortune is now about to smile upon us. The fleet of the 'Great Mogul,' freighted with the richest treasures, is soon to come out of the Red Sea. From the capture of those heavily laden ships, we will all grow rich."

The crew, ready enough to become pirates, cheered lustily: and, turning his back upon all hopes of an honorable career, Kidd set out in search of the treasure fleet. After cruising for four days, the "Adventure" fell in with the squadron, which proved to be under convoy of an English and a Dutch man-of-war. The squadron was a large one, and the ships greatly scattered. By skilful seamanship, Kidd dashed down upon an outlying vessel, hoping to capture and plunder it before the convoying men-of-war could come to its rescue. But his first shot attracted the attention of the watchful guardians; and, though several miles away, they packed on all sail, and bore down to the rescue with such spirit that the disappointed pirate was forced to sheer off. Kidd was now desperate. He had failed as a reputable privateer, and his first attempt at piracy had failed. Thenceforward, he cast aside all scruples, and captured large ships and small, tortured their crews, and for a time seemed resolved to lead a piratical life. But there are evidences that at times this strange man relented, and strove to return to the path of duty and right. On one occasion, a Dutch ship crossed the path of the "Adventure," and the crew clamorously demanded her capture. Kidd firmly refused. A tumult arose. The captain drew his sabre and pistols, and gathering about him those still faithful, addressed the mutineers, saying, —

"You may take the boats and go. But those who thus leave this ship will never ascend its sides again."

The mutineers murmured loudly. One man, a gunner, named William Moore, stepped forward, saying, —

"You are ruining us all. You are keeping us in beggary and starvation. But for your whims, we might all be prosperous and rich."

At this outspoken mutiny, Kidd flew into a passion. Seizing a heavy bucket that stood near, he dealt Moore a terrible blow on the head. The unhappy man fell to the deck with a fractured skull, and the other mutineers sullenly yielded to the captain's will. Moore died the next day; and months after, when Kidd, after roving the seas, and robbing

ships of every nationality, was brought to trial at London, it was for the murder of William Moore that he was condemned to die. For Kidd's career subsequent to the incident of the Dutch ship was that of a hardened pirate. He captured and robbed ships, and tortured their passengers. He went to Madagascar, the rendezvous of the pirates, and joined in their revelry and debauchery. On the island were five or six hundred pirates, and ships flying the black flag were continually arriving or departing. The streets resounded with shouts of revelry, with curses, and with the cries of rage. Strong drinks were freely used. Drunkenness was everywhere. It was no uncommon thing for a hogshead of wine to be opened, and left standing in the streets, that any might drink who chose. The pirates, flush with their ill-gotten gains, spent money on gambling and kindred vices lavishly. The women who accompanied them to this lawless place were decked out with barbaric splendor in silks and jewels. On the arrival of a ship, the debauchery was unbounded. Such noted pirates as Blackbeard, Steed Bonnet, and Avary made the place their rendezvous, and brought thither their rich prizes and wretched prisoners. Blackbeard was one of the most desperate pirates of the age. He, with part of his crew, once terrorized the officials of Charleston, S.C., exacting tribute of medicines and provisions. Finally he was killed in action, and sixteen of his desperate gang expiated their crimes on the gallows.

To Madagascar, too, often came the two female pirates, Mary Read and Anne Bonny. These women, masquerading in men's clothing, were as desperate and bloody as the men by whose side they fought. By a strange coincidence, these two women enlisted on the same ship. Each knowing her own sex, and being ignorant of that of the other, they fell in love; and the final discovery of their mutual deception increased their intimacy. After serving with the pirates, working at the guns, swinging a cutlass in the boarding parties, and fighting a duel in which she killed her opponent, Mary Read determined to escape. There is every evidence that she wearied of the evil life she was leading, and was determined to quit it; but, before she could carry her intentions into effect, the ship on which she served was captured, and taken to England, where the pirates expiated their crimes on the gallows, Mary Read dying in prison before the day set for her execution.

After some months spent in licentious revelry at Madagascar, Kidd set out on a further cruise. During this voyage he learned that he had been proscribed as a pirate, and a price set on his head. Strange as it may appear, this news was a surprise to him. He seems to have deceived himself into thinking that his acts of piracy were simply the legitimate work of a privateersman. For a time he knew not what to do; but as by this time the coarse pleasures of an outlaw's life were distasteful to him, he determined to proceed to New York, and endeavor to prove himself an honest man. This determination proved to be an unfortunate one for him; for hardly had he arrived, when he was taken into custody, and sent to England for trial. He made an able defence, but was found guilty, and sentenced to be hanged; a sentence which was executed some months later, in the presence of a vast multitude of people, who applauded in the death of Kidd the end of the reign of outlaws upon the ocean.

## CHAPTER II.

EXPEDITIONS AGAINST NEIGHBORING COLONIES. — ROMANTIC CAREER OF SIR WILLIAM PHIPPS. — QUELLING A MUTINY. — EXPEDITIONS AGAINST QUEBEC.

WHILE it was chiefly in expeditions against the buccaneers, or in the defence of merchantmen against these predatory gentry, that the American colonists gained their experience in naval warfare, there were, nevertheless, some few naval expeditions fitted out by the colonists against the forces of a hostile government. Both to the north and south lay the territory of France and Spain, — England's traditional enemies; and so soon as the colonies began to give evidence of their value to the mother country, so soon were they dragged into the quarrels in which the haughty mistress of the seas was ever plunged. Of the southern colonies, South Carolina was continually embroiled with Spain, owing to the conviction of the Spanish that the boundaries of Florida — at that time a Spanish colony — included the greater part of the Carolinas. For the purpose of enforcing this idea, the Spaniards, in 1706, fitted out an expedition of four ships-of-war and a galley, which, under the command of a celebrated French admiral,

was despatched to take Charleston. The people of Charleston were in no whit daunted, and on the receipt of the news of the expedition began preparations for resistance. They had no naval vessels; but several large merchantmen, being in port, were hastily provided with batteries, and a large galley was converted into a flag-ship. Having no trained naval officers, the command of the improvised squadron was tendered to a certain Lieut.-Col. Rhett, who possessed the confidence of the colonists. Rhett accepted the command; and when the attacking party cast anchor some miles below the city, and landed their shore forces, he weighed anchor, and set out to attack them. But the Spaniards avoided the conflict, and fled out to sea, leaving their land forces to bear the brunt of battle. In this action, more than half of the invaders were killed or taken prisoners. Some days later, one of the Spanish vessels, having been separated from her consorts, was discovered by Rhett, who attacked her, and after a sharp fight captured her, bringing her with ninety prisoners to Charleston.

But it was chiefly in expeditions against the French colonies to the northward that the naval strength of the English colonies was exerted. Particularly were the colonies of Port Royal, in Acadia, and the French stronghold of Quebec coveted by the British, and they proved fertile sources of contention in the opening years of the eighteenth century. Although the movement for the capture of these colonies was incited by the ruling authorities of Great Britain, its execution was left largely to the colonists. One of the earliest of these expeditions was that which sailed from Nantasket, near Boston, in April, 1690, bound for the conquest of Port Royal.

This expedition was under the command of Sir William Phipps, a sturdy colonist, whose life was not devoid of romantic episodes. Though his ambitions were of the lowliest, — his dearest wish being "to command a king's ship, and own a fair brick house in the Green Lane of North Boston," — he managed to win for himself no small amount of fame and respect in the colonies. His first achievement was characteristic of that time, when Spanish galleons, freighted with golden ingots, still sailed the seas, when pirates buried their booty, and when the treasures carried down in sunken ships were not brought up the next day by divers clad in patented submarine armor. From a weather-beaten

old seaman, with whom he became acquainted while pursuing his trade of ship-carpentering, Phipps learned of a sunken wreck lying on the sandy bottom many fathoms beneath the blue surface of the Gulf of Mexico. The vessel had gone down fifty years before, and had carried with her great store of gold and silver, which she was carrying from the rich mines of Central and South America to the Court of Spain. Phipps, laboriously toiling with adze and saw in his ship-yard, listened to the story of the sailor, his blood coursing quicker in his veins, and his ambition for wealth and position aroused to its fullest extent. Here, then, thought he, was the opportunity of a lifetime. Could he but recover the treasures carried down with the sunken ship, he would have wealth and position in the colony. With these two allies at his command, the task of securing a command in the king's navy would be an easy one. But to seek out the sunken treasure required a ship and seamen. Clearly his own slender means could never meet the demands of so great an undertaking. Therefore, gathering together all his small savings, William Phipps set sail for England, in the hopes of interesting capitalists there in his scheme. By dint of indomitable persistence, the unknown American ship-carpenter managed to secure the influence of certain officials of high station in England, and finally managed to get the assistance of the British admiralty. A frigate, fully manned, was given him, and he set sail for the West Indies.

Once arrived in the waters of the Spanish Main, he began his search. Cruising about the spot indicated by his seafaring informant as the location of the sunken vessel, sounding and dredging occupied the time of the treasure-seekers for months. The crew, wearying of the fruitless search, began to murmur, and signs of mutiny were rife. Phipps, filled with thoughts of the treasure for which he sought, saw not at all the lowering looks, nor heard the half-uttered threats, of the crew as he passed them. But finally the mutiny so developed that he could no longer ignore its existence.

It was then the era of the buccaneers. Doubtless some of the crew had visited the outlaws' rendezvous at New Providence, and had told their comrades of the revelry and ease in which the sea robbers spent their days. And so it happened that one day, as Phipps stood on the quarter-deck vainly trying to choke down the nameless fear that had begun to oppress him, — the fear that his life's venture had proved a failure, — his

crew came crowding aft, armed to the teeth, and loudly demanded that the captain should abandon his foolish search, and lead them on a fearless buccaneering cruise along the Spanish Main. The mutiny was one which might well have dismayed the boldest sea captain. The men were desperate, and well armed. Phipps was almost without support; for his officers, by their irresolute and timid demeanor, gave him little assurance of aid.

Standing on the quarter-deck, Phipps listened impatiently to the complaints of the mutineers; but, when their spokesman called upon him to lead them upon a piratical cruise, he lost all control of himself, and, throwing all prudence to the winds, sprung into the midst of the malcontents, and laid about him right manfully with his bare fists. The mutineers were all well armed, but seemed loath to use their weapons; and the captain, a tall, powerful man, soon awed them all into submission.

Though he showed indomitable energy in overcoming obstacles, Phipps was not destined to discover the object of his search at this time; and, after several months' cruising, he was forced, by the leaky condition of his vessel, to abandon the search. But, before leaving the waters of the Spanish Main, he obtained enough information to convince him that his plan was a practicable one, and no mere visionary scheme. On reaching England, he went at once to some wealthy noblemen, and, laying before them all the facts in his possession, so interested them in the project that they readily agreed to supply him with a fresh outfit. After a few weeks spent in organizing his expedition, the treasure-seeker was again on the ocean, making his way toward the Mexican Gulf. This time his search was successful, and a few days' work with divers and dredges about the sunken ship brought to light bullion and specie to the amount of more than a million and a half dollars. As his ill success in the first expedition had embroiled him with his crew, so his good fortune this time aroused the cupidity of the sailors. Vague rumors of plotting against his life reached the ears of Phipps. Examining further into the matter, he learned that the crew was plotting to seize the vessel, divide the treasure, and set out upon a buccaneering cruise. Alarmed at this intelligence, Phipps strove to conciliate the seamen by offering them a share of the treasure. Each man should receive a portion, he promised, even if he himself had to pay it. The men agreed

to this proposition; and so well did Phipps keep his word with them on returning to England, that, of the whole treasure, only about eighty thousand dollars remained to him as his share. This, however, was an ample fortune for those times; and with it Phipps returned to Boston, and began to devote himself to the task of securing a command in the royal navy.

His first opportunity to distinguish himself came in the expedition of 1690 against Port Royal. Throughout the wars between France and England, the French settlement of Port Royal had been a thorn in the flesh of Massachusetts. From Port Royal, the trim-built speedy French privateers put to sea, and seldom returned without bringing in their wake some captured coaster or luckless fisherman hailing from the colony of the Puritans. When the depredations of the privateers became unbearable, Massachusetts bestirred herself, and the doughty Phipps was sent with an expedition to reduce their unneighborly neighbor to subjection. Seven vessels and two hundred and eighty-eight men were put under the command of the lucky treasure-hunter. The expedition was devoid of exciting or novel features. Port Royal was reached without disaster, and the governor surrendered with a promptitude which should have won immunity for the people of the village. But the Massachusetts sailors had not undertaken the enterprise for glory alone, and they plundered the town before taking to their ships again.

This expedition, however, was but an unimportant incident in the naval annals of the colonies. It was followed quickly by an expedition of much graver importance.

When Phipps returned after capturing and plundering Port Royal, he found Boston vastly excited over the preparations for an expedition against Quebec. The colony was in no condition to undertake the work of conquest. Prolonged Indian wars had greatly depleted its treasury. Vainly it appealed to England for aid, but, receiving no encouragement, sturdily determined to undertake the expedition unaided. Sailors were pressed from the merchant-shipping. Trained bands, as the militia of that day was called, drilled in the streets, and on the common. Subscription papers were being circulated; and vessel owners were blandly given the choice between voluntarily loaning their vessels to the colony, or having them peremptorily seized. In this way a fleet of thirty-two vessels had been collected; the largest of which was a ship called the "Six

Friends," built for the West India trade, and carrying forty-four guns. This armada was manned by seamen picked up by a press so vigorous, that Gloucester, the chief seafaring town of the colony, was robbed of two-thirds of its men. Hardly had Capt. Phipps, flushed with victory, returned from his Port Royal expedition, when he was given command of the armada destined for the capture of Quebec.

Early in August the flotilla set sail from Boston Harbor. The day was clear and warm, with a light breeze blowing. From his flag-ship Phipps gave the signal for weighing anchor, and soon the decks of the vessels thickly strewn about the harbor resounded to the tread of men about the capstan. Thirty-two vessels of the squadron floated lightly on the calm waters of the bay; and darting in and out among them were light craft carrying pleasure-seekers who had come down to witness the sailing of the fleet, friends and relatives of the sailors who were there to say farewell, and the civic dignitaries who came to wish the expedition success. One by one the vessels beat their way down the bay, and, rounding the dangerous reef at the mouth of the harbor, laid their course to the northward. It was a motley fleet of vessels. The "Six Brothers" led the way, followed by brigs, schooners, and many sloop-rigged fishing-smacks. With so ill-assorted a flotilla, it was impossible to keep any definite sailing order. The first night scattered the vessels far and wide, and thenceforward the squadron was not united until it again came to anchor just above the mouth of the St. Lawrence. It seemed as though the very elements had combined against the voyagers. Though looking for summer weather, they encountered the bitter gales of November. Only after they had all safely entered the St. Lawrence, and were beyond injury from the storms, did the gales cease. They had suffered all the injury that tempestuous weather could do them, and they then had to chafe under the enforced restraints of a calm.

Phipps had rallied his scattered fleet, and had proceeded up the great river of the North to within three days' sail of Quebec, when the calm overtook him. On the way up the river he had captured two French luggers, and learned from his prisoners that Quebec was poorly fortified, that the cannon on the redoubts were dismounted, and that hardly two hundred men could be rallied to its defence. Highly elated at this, the Massachusetts admiral pressed forward. He anticipated that Quebec,

like Port Royal, would surrender without striking a blow. Visions of high honors, and perhaps even a commission in the royal navy, floated across his brain. And while thus hurrying forward his fleet, drilling his men, and building his air-castles, his further progress was stopped by a dead calm which lasted three weeks.

How fatal to his hopes that calm was, Phipps, perhaps, never knew. The information he had wrung from his French prisoners was absolutely correct. Quebec at that time was helpless, and virtually at his mercy. But, while the Massachusetts armada lay idly floating on the unruffled bosom of the river, a man was hastening towards Quebec whose timely arrival meant the salvation of the French citadel.

This man was Frontenac, then governor of the French colony, and one of the most picturesque figures in American history. A soldier of France; a polished courtier at the royal court; a hero on the battle-field, and a favorite in the ball-room; a man poor in pocket, but rich in influential connections, — Frontenac had come to the New World to seek that fortune and position which he had in vain sought in the Old. When the vague rumors of the hostile expedition of the Massachusetts colony reached his ears, Frontenac was far from Quebec, toiling in the western part of the colony. Wasting no time, he turned his steps toward the threatened city. His road lay through an almost trackless wilderness; his progress was impeded by the pelting rains of the autumnal storms. But through forest and through rain he rode fiercely; and at last as he burst from the forest, and saw towering before him the rocks of Cape Diamond, a cry of joy burst from his lips. On the broad, still bosom of the St. Lawrence Bay floated not a single hostile sail. The soldier had come in time.

With the governor in the city, all took courage, and the work of preparation for the coming struggle went forward with a rush. Far and wide throughout the parishes was spread the news of war, and daily volunteers came flocking in to the defence. The ramparts were strengthened, and cannon mounted. Volunteers and regulars drilled side by side, until the four thousand men in the city were converted into a well-disciplined body of troops. And all the time the sentinels on the Saut au Matelot were eagerly watching the river for the first sign of the English invaders.

It was before dawn, on the morning of Oct. 16, that the people of the little city, and the soldiery in the tents, were awakened by the alarm raised by the sentries. All rushed to the brink of the heights, and peered eagerly out into the darkness. Far down the river could be seen the twinkling lights of vessels. As the eager watchers strove to count them, other lights appeared upon the scene, moving to and fro, but with a steady advance upon Quebec. The gray dawn, breaking in the east, showed the advancing fleet. Frontenac and his lieutenants watched the ships of the enemy round the jutting headland of the Point of Orleans; and, by the time the sun had risen, thirty-four hostile craft were at anchor in the basin of Quebec.

The progress of the fleet up the river, from the point at which it had been so long delayed, had been slow, and greatly impeded by the determined hostility of the settlers along the banks. The sailors at their work were apt to be startled by the whiz of a bullet; and an inquiry as to the cause would have probably discovered some crouching sharp-shooter, his long rifle in his hand, hidden in a clump of bushes along the shore. Bands of armed men followed the fleet up the stream, keeping pace with the vessels, and occasionally affording gentle reminders of their presence in the shape of volleys of rifle-balls that sung through the crowded decks of the transports, and gave the sailor lads a hearty disgust for this river fighting. Phipps tried repeatedly to land shore parties to clear the banks of skirmishers, and to move on the city by land. As often, however, as he made the effort, his troops were beaten back by the ambushed sharp-shooters, and his boats returned to the ships, bringing several dead and wounded.

While the soldiery on the highlands of Quebec were eagerly examining the hostile fleet, the invaders were looking with wonder and admiration at the scene of surpassing beauty spread out before them. Parkman, the historian and lover of the annals of the French in America, thus describes it: —

"When, after his protracted voyage, Phipps sailed into the basin of Quebec, one of the grandest scenes on the western continent opened upon his sight. The wide expanse of waters, the lofty promontory beyond, and the opposing Heights of Levi, the cataract of Montmorenci, the distant range of the Laurentian Mountains, the warlike rock with its diadem

of walls and towers, the roofs of the Lower Town clustering on the strand beneath, the Chateau St. Louis perched at the brink of the cliff, and over it the white banner, spangled with *fleurs de lis*, flaunting defiance in the clear autumnal air."

Little time was spent, however, in admiration of the scene. When the click of the last chain-cable had ceased, and, with their anchors reposing at the bottom of the stream, the ships swung around with their bows to the current, a boat put off from the flag-ship bearing an officer intrusted with a note from Phipps to the commandant of the fort. The reception of this officer was highly theatrical. Half way to the shore he was taken into a French canoe, blindfolded, and taken ashore. The populace crowded about him as he landed, hooting and jeering him as he was led through winding, narrow ways, up stairways, and over obstructions, until at last the bandage was torn from his eyes, and he found himself in the presence of Frontenac. The French commander was clad in a brilliant uniform, and surrounded by his staff, gay in warlike finery. With courtly courtesy he asked the envoy for his letter, which, proving to be a curt summons to surrender, he answered forthwith in a stinging speech. The envoy, abashed, asked for a written answer.

"No," thundered Frontenac, "I will answer your master only by the mouths of my cannon, that he may learn that a man like me is not to be summoned after this fashion. Let him do his best, and I will do mine."

The envoy returned to his craft, and made his report. The next day hostilities opened. Wheeling his ships into line before the fortifications, Phipps opened a heavy fire upon the city. From the frowning ramparts on the heights, Frontenac's cannon answered in kind. Fiercely the contest raged until nightfall, and vast was the consumption of gunpowder; but damage done on either side was but little. All night the belligerents rested on their arms; but, at daybreak, the roar of the cannonade recommenced.

The gunners of the opposing forces were now upon their mettle, and the gunnery was much better than the day before. A shot from the shore cut the flag-staff of the admiral's ship, and the cross of St. George fell into the river. Straightway a canoe put out from the shore, and with swift, strong paddle-strokes was guided in chase of the floating trophy. The fire of the fleet was quickly concentrated upon the

adventurous canoeists. Cannon-balls and rifle-bullets cut the water about them; but their frail craft survived the leaden tempest, and they captured the trophy, and bore it off in triumph.

Phipps felt that the incident was an unfavorable omen, and would discourage his men. He cast about in his mind for a means of retaliation. Far over the roofs of the city rose a tapering spire, that of the cathedral in the Upper Town. On this spire, the devout Catholics of the French city had hung a picture of the Holy Family as an invocation of Divine aid. Through his spy-glass, Phipps could see that some strange object hung from the steeple, and, suspecting its character, commanded the gunners to try to knock it down. For hours the Puritans wasted their ammunition in this vain target-practice, but to no avail. The picture still hung on high; and the devout Frenchmen ascribed its escape to a miracle, although its destruction would have been more miraculous still.

It did not take long to convince Phipps that in this contest his fleet was getting badly worsted, and he soon withdrew his vessels to a place of safety. The flag-ship had been fairly riddled with shot; and her rigging was so badly cut, that she could only get out of range of the enemy's guns by cutting her cables, and drifting away with the current. Her example was soon followed by the remaining vessels.

Sorely crestfallen, Phipps abandoned the fight, and prepared to return to Boston. His voyage thither was stormy; and three or four of his vessels never were heard of, having been dashed to pieces by the waves, or cast away upon the iron-bound coast of Nova Scotia or Maine. His expedition was the most costly in lives and in treasure ever undertaken by a single colony, and, despite its failure, forms the most notable incident in the naval annals of the colonies prior to the Revolution.

The French colonies continued to be a fruitful source of war and turmoil. Many were the joint military and naval expeditions fitted out against them by the British colonies. Quebec, Louisbourg, and Port Royal were all threatened; and the two latter were captured by colonial expeditions. From a naval point of view, these expeditions were but trifling. They are of some importance, however, in that they gave the colonists an opportunity to try their prowess on the ocean; and in this irregular service were bred some sailors who fought right valiantly for the rebellious colonies against the king, and others who did no less valiant service under the royal banner.

## CHAPTER III.

OPENING OF THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION. — THE AFFAIR OF THE SCHOONER "ST. JOHN." — THE PRESS-GANG AND ITS WORK. — THE SLOOP "LIBERTY." — DESTRUCTION OF THE "GASPEE." — THE BOSTON TEA-PARTY.

IT is unnecessary to enter into an account of the causes that led up to the revolt of the American Colonies against the oppression of King George and his subservient Parliament. The story of the Stamp Act, the indignation of the Colonies, their futile attempts to convince Parliament of the injustice of the measure, the stern measures adopted by the British to put down the rising insubordination, the Boston Massacre, and the battles at Concord and Lexington are familiar to every American boy. But not every young American knows that almost the first act of open resistance to the authority of the king took place on the water, and was to some extent a naval action.

The revenue laws, enacted by the English Parliament as a means of extorting money from the Colonies, were very obnoxious to the people of America. Particularly did the colonists of Rhode Island protest against them, and seldom lost an opportunity to evade the payment of the taxes.

Between Providence and Newport, illicit trade flourished; and the waters of Narragansett Bay were dotted with the sail of small craft carrying cargoes on which no duties had ever been paid. In order to stop this nefarious traffic, armed vessels were stationed in the Bay, with orders to chase and search all craft suspected of smuggling. The presence of these vessels gave great offence to the colonists, and the inflexible

manner in which the naval officers discharged their duty caused more than one open defiance of the authority of King George.

The first serious trouble to grow out of the presence of the British cruisers in the bay was the affair of the schooner "St. John." This vessel was engaged in patrolling the waters of the bay in search of smugglers. While so engaged, her commander, Lieut. Hill, learned that a brig had discharged a suspicious cargo at night near Howland's Ferry. Running down to that point to investigate, the king's officers found the cargo to consist of smuggled goods; and, leaving a few men in charge, the cruiser hastily put out to sea in pursuit of the smuggler. The swift sailing schooner soon overtook the brig, and the latter was taken in to Newport as a prize. Although this affair occurred early in 1764, the sturdy colonists even then had little liking for the officers of the king. The sailors of the "St. John," careless of the evident dislike of the citizens of the town, swaggered about the streets, boasting of their capture, and making merry at the expense of the Yankees. Two or three fights between sailors and townspeople so stirred up the landsmen, that they determined to destroy the "St. John," and had actually fitted up an armed sloop for that purpose, when a second man-of-war appeared in the harbor and put a final stopper to the project. Though thus balked of their revenge, the townspeople showed their hatred for the king's navy by seizing a battery, and firing several shots at the two armed vessels, but without effect.

During the same year, the little town of Newport again gave evidence of the growth of the revolutionary spirit. This time the good old British custom of procuring sailors for the king's ships by a system of kidnapping, commonly known as impressment, was the cause of the outbreak. For some months the British man-of-war "Maidstone" lay in the harbor of Newport, idly tugging at her anchors. It was a period of peace, and her officers had nothing to occupy their attention. Therefore they devoted themselves to increasing the crew of the vessel by means of raids upon the taverns along the water-front of the city.

The seafaring men of Newport knew little peace while the "Maidstone" was in port. The king's service was the dread of every sailor; and, with the press-gang nightly walking the streets, no sailor could feel secure. All knew the life led by the sailors on the king's ships. Those were the days when the cat-o'-nine-tails flourished, and the command of a beardless bit of

a midshipmen was enough to send a poor fellow to the gratings, to have his back cut to pieces by the merciless lash. The Yankee sailors had little liking for this phase of sea-life, and they gave the men-of-war a wide berth.

Often it happened, however, that a party of jolly mariners sitting over their pipes and grog in the snug parlor of some sea-shore tavern, spinning yarns of the service they had seen on the gun-decks of his Majesty's ships, or of shipwreck and adventure in the merchant service, would start up and listen in affright, as the measured tramp of a body of men came up the street. Then came the heavy blow on the door.

"Open in the king's name," shouts a gruff voice outside; and the entrapped sailors, overturning the lights, spring for doors and windows, in vain attempts to escape the fate in store for them. The press-gang seldom returned to the ship empty handed, and the luckless tar who once fell into their clutches was wise to accept his capture good naturedly; for the bos'n's cat was the remedy commonly prescribed for sulkiness.

As long as the "Maidstone" lay in the harbor of Newport, raids such as this were of common occurrence. The people of the city grumbled a little; but it was the king's will, and none dared oppose it. The wives and sweethearts of the kidnapped sailors shed many a bitter tear over the disappearance of their husbands and lovers; but what were the tears of women to King George? And so the press-gang of the "Maidstone" might have continued to enjoy unopposed the stirring sport of hunting men like beasts, had the leaders not committed one atrocious act of inhumanity that roused the long-suffering people to resistance.

One breezy afternoon, a stanch brig, under full sail, came up the bay, and entered the harbor of Newport. Her sides were weather-beaten, and her dingy sails and patched cordage showed that she had just completed her long voyage. Her crew, a fine set of bronzed and hardy sailors, were gathered on her forecastle, eagerly regarding the cluster of cottages that made up the little town of Newport. In those cottages were many loved ones, wives, mothers, and sweethearts, whom the brave fellows had not seen for long and weary months; for the brig was just returning from a voyage to the western coast of Africa.

It is hard to describe the feelings aroused by the arrival of a ship in

port after a long voyage. From the outmost end of the longest wharf the relatives and friends of the sailors eagerly watch the approaching vessel, striving to find in her appearance some token of the safety of the loved ones on board. If a flag hangs at half-mast in the rigging, bitter is the suspense, and fearful the dread, of each anxious waiter, lest her husband or lover or son be the unfortunate one whose death is mourned. And on the deck of the ship the excitement is no less great. Even the hardened breast of the sailor swells with emotion when he first catches sight of his native town, after long months of absence. With eyes sharpened by constant searching for objects upon the broad bosom of the ocean, he scans the waiting crowd, striving to distinguish in the distance some well-beloved face. His spirits are light with the happy anticipation of a season in port with his loved ones, and he discharges his last duties before leaving the ship with a blithe heart.

So it was with the crew of the home-coming brig. Right merrily they sung out their choruses as they pulled at the ropes, and brought the vessel to anchor. The rumble of the hawser through the hawse-holes was sweet music to their ears; and so intent were they upon the crowd on the dock, that they did not notice two long-boats which had put off from the man-of-war, and were pulling for the brig. The captain of the merchantman, however, noticed the approach of the boats, and wondered what it meant. "Those fellows think I've smuggled goods aboard," said he. "However, they can spend their time searching if they want. I've nothing in the hold I'm afraid to have seen."

The boats were soon alongside; and two or three officers, with a handful of jackies, clambered aboard the brig.

"Muster your men aft, captain," said the leader, scorning any response to the captain's salutation. "The king has need of a few fine fellows for his service."

"Surely, sir, you are not about to press any of these men," protested the captain. "They are just returning after a long voyage, and have not yet seen their families."

"What's that to me, sir?" was the response. "Muster your crew without more words."

Sullenly the men came aft, and ranged themselves in line before the boarding-officers. Each feared lest he might be one of those chosen to

fill the ship's roll of the "Maidstone;" yet each cherished the hope that he might be spared to go ashore, and see the loved ones whose greeting he had so fondly anticipated.

The boarding-officers looked the crew over, and, after consulting together, gruffly ordered the men to go below, and pack up their traps.

"Surely you don't propose to take my entire crew?" said the captain of the brig in wondering indignation.

"I know my business, sir," was the gruff reply, "and I do not propose to suffer any more interference."

The crew of the brig soon came on deck, carrying their bags of clothes, and were ordered into the man-o'-war's boats, which speedily conveyed them to their floating prison. Their fond visions of home had been rudely dispelled. They were now enrolled in his Majesty's service, and subject to the will of a blue-coated tyrant. This was all their welcome home.

When the news of this cruel outrage reached the shore, the indignation of the people knew no bounds. The thought of their fellow-townsmen thus cruelly deprived of their liberty, at the conclusion of a long and perilous voyage, set the whole village in a turmoil. Wild plots were concocted for the destruction of the man-of-war, that, sullen and unyielding, lay at her anchorage in the harbor. But the wrong done was beyond redress. The captured men were not to be liberated. There was no ordnance in the little town to compete with the guns of the "Maidstone," and the enraged citizens could only vent their anger by impotent threats and curses. Bands of angry men and boys paraded the streets, crying, 'Down with the press-gang," and invoking the vengeance of Heaven upon the officers of the man-of-war. Finally, they found a boat belonging to the "Maidstone" lying at a wharf. Dragging this ashore, the crowd procured ropes, and, after pulling the captured trophy up and down the streets, took it to the common in front of the Court-House, where it was burned in the presence of a great crowd, which heaped execrations upon the heads of the officers of the "Maidstone," and King George's press-gang.

After this occurrence, there was a long truce between the people of Newport and the officers of the British navy. But the little town was intolerant of oppression, and the revolutionary spirit broke out again in 1769. Historians have eulogized Boston as the cradle of liberty, and

by the British pamphleteers of that era the Massachusetts city was often called a hot-bed of rebellion. It would appear, however, that, while the people of Boston were resting contentedly under the king's rule, the citizens of Newport were chafing under the yoke, and were quick to resist any attempts at tyranny.

It is noticeable, that, in each outbreak of the people of Newport against the authority of the king's vessels, the vigor of the resistance increased, and their acts of retaliation became bolder. Thus in the affair of the "St. John" the king's vessel was fired on, while in the affair of the "Maidstone" the royal property was actually destroyed. In the later affairs with the sloop "Liberty" and the schooner "Gaspee," the revolt of the colonists was still more open, and the consequences more serious.

In 1769 the armed sloop "Liberty," Capt. Reid, was stationed in Narragansett Bay for the purpose of enforcing the revenue laws. Her errand made her obnoxious to the people on the coast, and the extraordinary zeal of her captain in discharging his duty made her doubly detested by seafaring people afloat or shore.

On the 17th of July the "Liberty," while cruising near the mouth of the bay, sighted a sloop and a brig under full sail, bound out. Promptly giving chase, the armed vessel soon overtook the merchantmen sufficiently to send a shot skipping along the crests of the waves, as a polite invitation to stop. The two vessels hove to, and a boat was sent from the man-of-war to examine their papers, and see if all was right. Though no flaw was found in the papers of either vessel, Capt. Reid determined to take them back to Newport, which was done. In the harbor the two vessels were brought to anchor under the guns of the armed sloop, and without any reason or explanation were kept there several days. After submitting to this wanton detention for two days, Capt. Packwood of the brig went on board the "Liberty" to make a protest to Capt. Reid, and at the same time to get some wearing apparel taken from his cabin at the time his vessel had been captured. On reaching the deck of the armed vessel, he found Capt. Reid absent, and his request for his property was received with ridicule. Hot words soon led to violence; and as Capt. Packwood stepped in to his boat to return to his ship, he was fired at several times, none of the shots taking effect.

The news of this assault spread like wildfire in the little town. The

people congregated on the streets, demanding reparation. The authorities sent a message to Capt. Reid, demanding that the man who fired the shots be given up. Soon a boat came from the "Liberty," bringing a man who was handed over to the authorities as the culprit. A brief examination into the case showed that the man was not the guilty party, and that his surrender was a mere subterfuge. The people then determined to be trifled with no longer, and made preparations to take vengeance upon the insolent oppressors.

The work of preparation went on quietly; and by nightfall a large number of men had agreed to assemble at a given signal, and march upon the enemy. Neither the authorities of the town nor the officers on the threatened vessel were given any intimation of the impending outbreak. Yet the knots of men who stood talking earnestly on the street corners, or looked significantly at the trim navy vessel lying in the harbor, might have well given cause for suspicion.

That night, just as the dusk was deepening into dark, a crowd of men marched down the street to a spot where a number of boats lay hidden in the shadow of a wharf. Embarking in these silently, they bent to the oars at the whispered word of command; and the boats were soon gliding swiftly over the smooth, dark surface of the harbor, toward the sloop-of-war. As they drew near, the cry of the lookout rang out, —

"Boat ahoy!"

No answer. The boats, crowded with armed men, still advanced.

"Boat ahoy! Answer, or I'll fire."

And, receiving no response, the lookout gave the alarm, and the watch came tumbling up, just in time to be driven below or disarmed by the crowd of armed men that swarmed over the gunwale of the vessel. There was no bloodshed. The crew of the "Liberty" was fairly surprised, and made no resistance. The victorious citizens cut the sloop's cables, and allowed her to float on shore near Long Wharf. Then, feeling sure that their prey could not escape them, they cut away her masts, liberated their captives, and taking the sloop's boats, dragged them through the streets to the common, where they were burned on a triumphal bonfire, amid the cheers of the populace.

But the exploit was not to end here. With the high tide the next day, the hulk of the sloop floated away, and drifted ashore again on

Goat Island. When night fell, some adventurous spirits stealthily went over, and, applying the torch to the stranded ship, burned it to the water's edge. Thus did the people of Newport resist tyranny.

It may well be imagined that so bold a defiance of the royal authority caused a great sensation. Prolonged and vigorous were the attempts of the servants of the king to find out the rebellious parties who had thus destroyed his Majesty's property. But their efforts were in vain. The identity of the captors of the "Liberty" was carefully concealed, and even to this day none of their names has become known. But, before the people of Newport had done talking about this affair, another outbreak occurred, which cast the capture and destruction of the "Liberty" into the shade.

This was the affair of the "Gaspee," — considered by many historians the virtual opening of the revolutionary struggle of the Colonies against Great Britain. The "Gaspee," like the "St. John" and the "Liberty," was an armed vessel stationed in Narragansett Bay to enforce the revenue. She was commanded by Lieut. Dudingston of the British navy, and carried eight guns. By pursuing the usual tactics of the British officers stationed on the American coast, Duddingston had made himself hated; and his vessel was marked for destruction. Not a boat could pass between Providence and Newport without being subjected to search by the crew of the "Gaspee;" and the Yankee sailors swore darkly, that, when the time was ripe, they would put an end to the Britisher's officious meddling.

The propitious time arrived one bright June morning in the year 1772, when the "Gaspee" gave chase to a Newport packet which was scudding for Providence, under the command of Capt. Thomas Lindsey. The armed vessel was a clean-cut little craft, and, carrying no heavier load than a few light guns of the calibre then in vogue, could overhaul with ease almost any merchantman on the coast. So on this eventful day she was rapidly overhauling the chase, when, by a blunder of the pilot, she was run hard and fast upon a spit of sand running out from Namquit Point, and thus saw her projected prize sail away in triumph.

But the escape of her prize was not the greatest disaster that was to befall the "Gaspee" that day. Lindsey, finding himself safe from the clutches of the enemy, continued his course to Providence, and on

arriving at that city reported the condition of the "Gaspee" to a prominent citizen, who straightway determined to organize an expedition for the destruction of the pest of marine traffic. He therefore gave orders to a trusty ship-master to collect eight of the largest long-boats in the harbor, and, having muffled their oars and rowlocks, place them at Fenner's Wharf, near a noted tavern.

That night, soon after sunset, as the tradesmen were shutting up their shops, and the laboring men were standing on the streets talking after their day's work, a man passed down the middle of each street, beating a drum, and crying aloud, —

"The schooner 'Gaspee' is ashore on Namquit Point. Who will help destroy her?"

All who expressed a desire to join in the enterprise were directed to repair to the Sabin House; and thither, later in the evening, flocked many of the townspeople, carrying guns, powder-flasks, and bullet-pouches. Within the house all was life and bustle. The great hall was crowded with determined men, discussing the plan of attack. Guns stood in every corner, while down in the kitchen a half a dozen men stood about a glowing fire busily casting bullets. At last, all being prepared, the party crossed the street to the dock, and embarked,—a veteran sea-captain taking the tiller of each boat.

On the way down the harbor the boats stopped, and took aboard a number of paving-stones and stout clubs, as weapons for those who had no muskets. After this stoppage the boats continued on their way, until, when within sixty yards of the "Gaspee," the long-drawn hail, "Who comes there?" rang out over the water. No answer was made, and the lookout quickly repeated his hail. Capt. Whipple, one of the leaders of the attack, then responded,—

"I want to come on board."

Dudingston, who was below at the time, rushed on deck, exclaiming, "Stand off. You can't come aboard."

As Dudingston stood at the side of the "Gaspee" warning off the assailants, he presented a good mark; and Joseph Bucklin, who pulled an oar in the leading boat, turned to a comrade and said, "Ephe, lend me your gun, and I can kill that fellow." The gun was accordingly handed him, and he fired. Dudingston fell to the deck. Just as the shot was

fired, the leader of the assailants cried out,—

"I am sheriff of the county of Kent. I am come for the commander of this vessel; and have him I will, dead or alive. Men, spring to your oars."

In an instant the boats were under the lee of the schooner, and the attacking party was clambering over the side. The first man to attempt to board seized a rope, and was clambering up, when one of the British cut the rope, and let him fall into the water. He quickly recovered himself, and was soon on deck, where he found his comrades driving the crew of the "Gaspee" below, and meeting with but little resistance.

A surgeon who was with the party of Americans led the boarders below, and began the task of tying the hands of the captured crew with strong tarred cord. While thus engaged, he was called on deck.

"What is wanted, Mr. Brown?" asked he, calling the name of the person inquiring for him.

"Don't call names, but go immediately into the cabin," was the response. "There is one wounded, and will bleed to death."

The surgeon went into the captain's cabin, and there found Dudingston, severely wounded, and bleeding freely. Seeing no cloth suitable for bandages, the surgeon opened his vest, and began to tear his own shirt into strips to bind up the wound. With the tenderest care the hurt of the injured officer was attended to; and he was gently lowered into a boat, and rowed up the river to Providence.

The Americans remained in possession of the captured schooner, and quickly began the work of demolition. In the captain's cabin were a number of bottles of liquor, and for these the men made a rush; but the American surgeon dashed the bottles to pieces with the heels of his heavy boots, so that no scenes of drunkenness were enacted. After breaking up the furniture and trappings of the craft, her people were bundled over the side into the boats of their captors, and the torch was set to the schooner. The boats lay off a little distance until the roaring flames satisfied them that the "Gaspee" would never again annoy American merchantmen. As the schooner's shotted guns went off one after the other, the Americans turned their boats' prows homeward, and soon dispersed quietly to their homes.

It is almost incredible that the identity of the parties to this expedition was kept a secret until long after the Revolution. Although

the British authorities made the most strenuous efforts, and offered huge rewards for the detection of the culprits, not one was discovered until after the Colonies had thrown off the royal yoke, when they came boldly forward, and boasted of their exploit.

After the destruction of the "Gaspee," the colonists in no way openly opposed the authority of the king, until the time of those stirring events immediately preceding the American Revolution. Little was done on the water to betoken the hatred of the colonists for King George. The turbulent little towns of Providence and Newport subsided, and the scene of revolt was transferred to Massachusetts, and particularly to Boston. In the streets of Boston occurred the famous massacre, and at the wharves of Boston lay the three ships whose cargo aroused the ire of the famous Boston tea-party.

To almost every young American the story of the Boston tea-party is as familiar as his own name, — how the British Parliament levied a tax upon tea, how the Colonies refused to pay it, and determined to use none of the article; how British merchants strove to force the tea upon the unwilling colonists, and how the latter refused to permit the vessels to unload, and in some cases drove them back to England. At Philadelphia, Annapolis, Charleston, Newport, and Providence, disturbances took place over the arrival of the tea-ships; but at Boston the turbulence was the greatest.

The story of that dramatic scene in the great drama of American revolution has been told too often to bear repetition. The arrival of three ships laden with tea aroused instant indignation in the New England city. Mass meetings were held, the captains of the vessels warned not to attempt to unload their cargoes, and the consignees were terrified into refusing to have any thing to do with the tea.

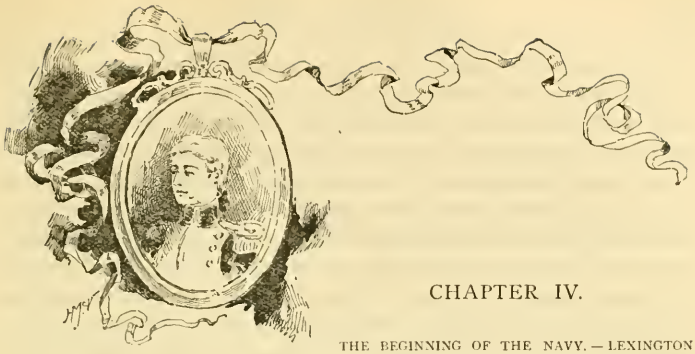
In the midst of an indignation meeting held at the Old South Church, a shrill war-whoop resounded from one of the galleries. The startled audience, looking in that direction, saw a person disguised as a Mohawk Indian, who wildly waved his arms and shouted, —

"Boston Harbor a tea-pot to-night! Hurrah for Griffin's Wharf."

In wild excitement the meeting adjourned, and the people crowded out into the streets. Other Indians were seen running down the streets in the direction of Griffin's Wharf, where the tea-ships were moored, and thither the people turned their steps.

On reaching the wharf, a scene of wild confusion was witnessed. The three tea-ships lay side by side at the wharf. Their decks were crowded with men, many of them wearing the Indian disguise. The hatches were off the hatchways; and the chests of tea were being rapidly passed up, broken open, and thrown overboard. There was little noise, as the workers seemed to be well disciplined, and went about their work in the bright moonlight with systematic activity. In about three hours the work was done. Three hundred and forty-two chests of tea had been thrown overboard, and the rioters dispersed quietly to their homes.

The incident of the destruction of the tea in Boston Harbor was the last of the petty incidents that led up to the American Revolution. Following quick upon it came Lexington, Concord, and Bunker Hill, — then the great conflict was fairly under way, and the Colonies were fighting for liberty. What part the sailors of the colonies took in that struggle, it is the purpose of this book to recount.



## CHAPTER IV.

THE BEGINNING OF THE NAVY. — LEXINGTON AND CONCORD. — A BLOW STRUCK IN MAINE. — CAPTURE OF THE "MARGARETTA." — GEN. WASHINGTON AND THE NAVY. — WORK OF CAPT. MANLY.

IN TREATING of the history of the navy during the war of the Revolution, we must always bear in mind the fact, that, during the greater part of that war, there was no navy. Indeed, the subject presents much the same aspect as the celebrated chapter on snakes in Ireland, which consisted of exactly six words, "There are no snakes in Ireland." So many of the episodes and incidents of the Revolutionary war that we chronicle as part of the naval history of that struggle are naval only in that they took place on the water. The participants in them were often longshoremen, fishermen, or privateersmen, and but seldom sailors enrolled in the regular navy of the united colonies. Nevertheless, these irregular forces accomplished some results that would be creditable to a navy in the highest state of efficiency and discipline.

The expense of building vessels-of-war, and the difficulty, amounting even to impossibility, of procuring cannon for their armament, deterred the Colonies from equipping a naval force. All the energies of the revolutionists were directed towards organizing and equipping the army. The cause of independence upon the ocean was left to shift for itself. But, as the war spread, the depredations of British vessels along the coast became so intolerable that some colonies fitted out armed vessels for self-protection. Private enterprise sent out many privateers to prey upon British commerce,

so that the opening months of the year 1776 saw many vessels on the ocean to support the cause of the Colonies. To man these vessels, there were plenty of sailors; for even at that early day New England had begun to develop that race of hardy seamen for which she is still noted in this day of decadence in the American marine. There was, however, a sad lack of trained officers to command the vessels of the infant navy. Many Americans were enrolled on the lists of the ships flying the royal banner of England, but most of these remained in the British service. The men, therefore, who were to command the ships of the colonies, were trained in the rough school of the merchant service, and had smelt gunpowder only when resisting piratical attacks, or in serving themselves as privateers.

For these reasons the encounters and exploits that we shall consider as being part of the naval operations of the Revolutionary war were of a kind that would to-day be regarded as insignificant skirmishes; and the naval officer of to-day would look with supreme contempt upon most of his brethren of '76, as so many untrained sea-guerillas. Nevertheless, the achievements of some of the seamen of the Revolution are not insignificant, even when compared with exploits of the era of Farragut; and it must be remembered that the efforts of the devoted men were directed against a nation that had in commission at the opening of the war three hundred and fifty-three vessels, and even then bore proudly the title conferred upon her by the consent of all nations, — "The Mistress of the Seas."

It was on the 19th of April, 1775, that the redoubtable Major Pitcairn and his corps of scarlet-coated British regulars shot down the colonists on the green at Lexington, and then fled back to Boston followed by the enraged minute-men, who harassed the retreating red-coats with a constant fire of musketry. The news of the battle spread far and wide; and wherever the story was told, the colonists began arming themselves, and preparing for resistance to the continually increasing despotism of the British authorities.

On the 9th of May, a coasting schooner from Boston put into the little seaport of Machias on the coast of Maine. The people of the little town gathered at the wharf, and from the sailors first heard the story of Lexington and Concord. The yoke of the British Government had rested

lightly on the shoulders of the people of Machias. Far from the chief cities of the New World, they had heard little of the continued dissensions between the Colonies and the home Government, and they heard the story of the rebellion with amazement. But however unprepared they might have been for the news of the outbreak, their sympathies went warmly out to their struggling brethren, and they determined to place themselves shoulder to shoulder with the Massachusetts colonists in the fight against the oppression of the British. Their opportunity for action came that very night.

As the sturdy young colonists stood on the deck listening to the stories of the newly arrived sailors, they could see floating lightly at anchor near the wharf a trimly rigged schooner flying the ensign of the British navy. This craft was the "Margaretta," an armed schooner acting as convoy to two sloops that were then loading with ship-timber to be used in the service of the king.

The Boston sailors had not yet finished their narrative of the two battles, when the thought occurred to some of the adventurous listeners that they might strike a retaliatory blow by capturing the "Margaretta." Therefore, bidding the sailors to say nothing to the British of Lexington and Concord, they left the wharf and dispersed through the town, seeking for recruits. That same evening, sixty stalwart men assembled in a secluded farm-house, and laid their plans for the destruction of the schooner. It was then Saturday night, and the conspirators determined to attack the vessel the next morning while the officers were at church. All were to proceed by twos and threes to the wharf, in order that no suspicion might be aroused. Once at the water-side, they would rush to their boats, and carry the schooner by boarding.

Sunday morning dawned clear, and all seemed propitious for the conspirators. The "Margaretta" had then been in port for more than a week, and her officers had no reason to doubt the loyalty and friendship of the inhabitants: no whisper of the occurrences in Massachusetts, nor any hint of the purposes of the people of Machias, had reached their ears. Therefore, on this peaceful May morning, Capt. Moore donned his full-dress uniform, and with his brother officers proceeded to the little church in the village.

Every thing then seemed favorable to the success of the adventure.

The "Margaretta," manned by a sleepy crew, and deserted by her officers, lay within easy distance of the shore. It seemed as though the conspirators had only to divide into two parties; and while the one surrounded the church, and captured the worshipping officers, the others might descend upon the schooner, and easily make themselves masters of all.

But the plot failed. History fails to record just how or why the suspicions of Capt. Moore were aroused. Whether it was that the wary captain noticed the absence of most of the young men of the congregation, or whether he saw the conspirators assembling on the dock, is not known. But certain it is that the good dominie in the pulpit, and the pious people in the pews, were mightily startled by the sudden uprisal of Capt. Moore, who sprang from his seat, and, calling upon his officers to follow him, leaped through the great window of the church, and ran like mad for the shore, followed by the rest of the naval party.

There was no more church for the good people of Machias that morning. Even the preacher came down from his pulpit to stare through his horn-rimmed glasses at the retreating forms of his whilom listeners. And, as he stood in blank amazement at the church door, he saw a large party of the missing young men of his congregation come dashing down the street in hot pursuit of the retreating mariners. In their hands, the pursuers carried sabres, cutlasses, old flint-lock muskets, cumbrous horse-pistols, scythes, and reaping-hooks. The pursued wore no arms; and, as no boat awaited them at the shore, their case looked hopeless indeed. But the old salt left in charge of the schooner was equal to the occasion. The unsabbath-like tumult on the shore quickly attracted his attention, and with unfeigned astonishment he had observed his commander's unseemly egress from the church. But, when the armed band of colonists appeared upon the scene, he ceased to rub his eyes in wonder, and quickly loaded up a swivel gun, with which he let fly, over the heads of his officers, and in dangerous proximity to the advancing colonists. This fire checked the advance of the conspirators; and, while they wavered and hung back, a boat put off from the schooner, and soon took the officers aboard. Then, after firing a few solid shot over the town, merely as an admonition of what might be expected if the hot headed young men persisted in their violent outbreaks, the "Margaretta" dropped down the bay to a more secluded anchorage.

The defeated conspirators were vastly chagrined at the miscarriage of their plot; but, nothing daunted, they resolved to attempt to carry the schooner by assault, since strategy had failed. Therefore, early the next morning, four young men seized upon a sloop, and, bringing her up to the wharf, cheered lustily. A crowd soon gathered, and the project was explained, and volunteers called for. Thirty-five hardy sailors and woodmen hastily armed themselves with muskets, pitchforks, and axes; and, after taking aboard a small supply of provisions, the sloop dropped down the harbor toward the "Margaretta." The captain of the threatened schooner had observed through his spy-glass the proceedings at the wharf, and suspected his danger. He was utterly ignorant of the reason for this sudden hostility on the part of the people of Machias. He knew nothing of the quarrel that had thus provoked the rebellion of the colonies. Therefore, he sought to avoid a conflict; and, upon the approach of the sloop, he hoisted his anchor, and fled down the bay.

The sloop followed in hot haste. The Yankees crowded forward, and shouted taunts and jeers at their more powerful enemy who thus strove to avoid the conflict. Both vessels were under full sail; and the size of the schooner was beginning to tell, when, in jibing, she carried away her main boom. Nevertheless, she was so far ahead of the sloop that she was able to put into Holmes Bay, and take a spar out of a vessel lying there, before the sloop overtook her. But the delay incident upon changing the spars brought the sloop within range; and Capt. Moore, still anxious to avoid an encounter, cut away his boats, and stood out to sea. With plenty of sea room, and with a spanking breeze on the quarter, the sloop proved to be the better sailer. Moore then prepared for battle, and, as the sloop overhauled him, let fly one of his swivels, following it immediately with his whole broadside, killing one man. The sloop returned the fire with her one piece of ordnance, which was so well aimed as to kill the man at the helm of the "Margaretta," and clear her quarter-deck. The two vessels then closed, and a hand-to-hand battle began, in which muskets, hand-grenades, pikes, pitchforks, and cutlasses were used with deadly effect. The colonists strove to board their enemy, but were repeatedly beaten back. If any had thought that Capt. Moore's continued efforts to avoid a conflict were signs of cowardice, they were quickly undeceived; for that officer fought like a tiger,

standing on the quarter-deck rail, cheering on his men, and hurling hand-grenades down upon his assailants, until a shot brought him down. The fall of their captain disheartened the British; and the Americans quickly swarmed over the sides of the "Margaretta," and drove her crew below.

This victory was no mean achievement for the colonists. The "Margaretta" was vastly the superior, both in metal and in the strength of her crew. She was ably officered by trained and courageous seamen; while the Yankees had no leaders save one Jeremiah O'Brien, whom they had elected, by acclamation, captain. That the Americans had so quickly brought their more powerful foe to terms, spoke volumes for their pluck and determination. Nor were they content to rest with the capture of the schooner. Transferring her armament to the sloop, O'Brien set out in search of prizes, and soon fell in with, and captured, two small British cruisers. These he took to Watertown, where the Massachusetts Legislature was then in session. The news of his victory was received with vast enthusiasm; and the Legislature conferred upon him the rank of captain, and ordered him to set out on another cruise, and particularly watch out for British vessels bringing over provisions or munitions of war to the king's troops in America.

But by this time Great Britain was aroused. The king saw all America up in arms against his authority, and he determined to punish the rebellious colonists. A naval expedition was therefore sent against Falmouth, and that unfortunate town was given to the flames. The Legislature of Massachusetts then passed a law granting commissions to privateers, and directing the seizure of British ships. Thereafter the hostilities on the ocean, which had been previously unauthorized and somewhat piratical, had the stamp of legislative authority.

Petty hostilities along the coast were very active during the first few months of the war. The exploits of Capt. O'Brien stirred up seamen from Maine to the Carolinas, and luckless indeed was the British vessel that fell into their clutches. At Providence two armed American vessels re-took a Yankee brig and sloop that had been captured by the British. At Dartmouth a party of soldiers captured a British armed brig. In addition to these exploits, the success of the American privateers, which had got to sea in great numbers, added greatly to the credit of the American cause.

The first order looking toward the establishment of a national navy

was given by Gen. Washington in the latter part of 1775. The sagacious general, knowing that the British forces in Boston were supplied with provisions and munitions of war by sea, conceived the idea of fitting out some swift-sailing cruisers to intercept the enemy's cruisers, and cut off their supplies. Accordingly, on his own authority, he sent out Capt. Broughton with two armed schooners belonging to the colony of Massachusetts. Broughton was ordered to intercept two brigs bound for Quebec with military stores. This he failed to do, but brought in ten other vessels. Congress, however, directed the release of the captured ships, as it was then intended only to take such vessels as were actually employed in the king's service.

By this time Congress had become convinced that some naval force was absolutely essential to the success of the American cause. In October, 1775, it therefore fitted out, and ordered to sea, a number of small vessels. Of these the first to sail was the "Lee," under command of Capt. John Manly, whose honorable name, won in the opening years of the Revolution, fairly entitles him to the station of the father of the American navy.

With his swift cruiser, Manly patrolled the New England coast, and was marvellously successful in capturing British store-ships. Washington wrote to Congress, "I am in very great want of powder, lead, mortars, and, indeed, most sorts of military stores." Hardly had the letter been forwarded, when Manly appeared in port with a prize heavy laden with just the goods for which the commander-in-chief had applied. A queer coincidence is on record regarding these captured stores. Samuel Tucker, an able Yankee seaman, later an officer in the American navy, was on the docks at Liverpool as a transport was loading for America. As he saw the great cases of guns and barrels of powder marked "Boston" being lowered into the hold of the vessel, he said to a friend who stood with him, "I would walk barefoot one hundred miles, if by that means these arms could only take the direction of Cambridge." Three months later Tucker was in Washington's camp at Cambridge, and there saw the very arms he had so coveted on the Liverpool docks. They had been captured by Capt. Manly.

Manly's activity proved very harassing to the British, and the sloop-of-war "Falcon" was sent out to capture the Yankee. She fell in with

the "Lee" near Gloucester, just as the latter was making for that port with a merchant schooner in convoy. Manly, seeing that the Englishman was too heavy for him, deserted his convoy and ran into the port, where he anchored, out of reach of the sloop's guns. Capt. Lindzee of the "Falcon" stopped to capture the abandoned schooner, and then taking his vessel to the mouth of the port, anchored her in such a way as to prevent any escape for the "Lee." He then prepared to capture the Yankee by boarding. The "Falcon" drew too much water to run alongside the "Lee" at the anchorage Manly had chosen; and the Englishman therefore put his men in large barges, and with a force of about forty men set out to capture the schooner. Manly saw the force that was to be brought against him, and sent his men to quarters, preparing for a desperate resistance. The schooner was lying near the shore; and the townspeople and militia gathered by the water-side, with guns in their hands, prepared to lend their aid to the brave defenders of the "Lee." As the three barges drew near the schooner, Manly mounted the rail, and hailed them, warning them to keep off lest he fire upon them.

"Fire, and be hanged to you," was the response of the lieutenant in command of the assailants. "We have no fear of traitors."

So saying, the British pressed on through a fierce storm of musketry from the deck of the schooner and from the shore. They showed no lack of courage. The lieutenant himself brought his boat under the cabin windows, and was in the act of boarding, when a shot from the shore struck him in the thigh, and he was carried back to the man-of-war. Capt. Lindzee, who had watched the progress of the fight from the deck of the "Falcon," was greatly enraged when his lieutenant was thus disabled; and he hastily despatched re-enforcements to the scene of action, and directed the gunners on the "Falcon" to commence a cannonade of the town.

"Now," said he with an oath, "my boys, we will aim at the Presbyterian church. Well, my brave fellows, one shot more, and the house of God will fall before you."

But the British were fairly outfought, and the outcome of the battle was disastrous to them. A newspaper of the period, speaking of the fight says, "Under God, our little party at the waterside performed wonders; for they soon made themselves masters of both the schooners,

the cutter, the two barges, the boat, and every man in them, and all that pertained to them. In the action, which lasted several hours, we have lost but one man; two others wounded, — one of whom is since dead, the other very slightly wounded. We took of the man-of-war's men thirty-five; several are wounded, and one since dead; twenty-four are sent to head-quarters. The remainder, being impressed from this and neighboring towns, are permitted to return to their friends. This morning Capt. Lindzee warped off with but one-half of his men, with neither a prize-boat nor tender, except a small skiff the wounded lieutenant returned in."

The work done by the small armed schooners of which the "Lee" was a type encouraged Congress to proceed with the work of organizing a regular navy; and by the end of 1775 that body had authorized the building of thirteen war-vessels carrying from twenty-four to thirty-two guns each. But as some naval force was obviously necessary during the construction of this fleet, five vessels were procured, and the new navy was organized with the following roster of officers: —

| | |
|---|---|
| Esek Hopkins . . . . . | *Commander-in-chief.* |
| Dudley Saltonstall . . . . . | *Captain of the "Alfred."* |
| Abraham Whipple . . . . . | *Captain of the "Columbus."* |
| Nicholas Biddle . . . . . | *Captain of the "Andrea Doria."* |
| John B. Hopkins . . . . . | *Captain of the "Cabot."* |

A long list of lieutenants was also provided, among whom stands out boldly the name of John Paul Jones. John Manly, whose dashing work in the shooner "Lee" we have already noticed, was left in command of his little craft until the thirty-two-gun ship "Hancock" was completed, when he was put in charge of her.

It may possibly have occurred to some of my readers to wonder what flag floated from the mastheads of these ships. There is much confusion upon this point, and not a little uncertainty. There were three classes of American armed vessels on the seas. First were the privateers, that sailed under any flag that might suit their purpose. Next came the vessels fitted out and commissioned by the individual colonies; these usually floated the flag of the colony from which they hailed Last came the vessels commissioned by Congress, which at the outset floated many banners of diverse kinds. It fell to the lot

of Lieut. Paul Jones, however, to hoist the first authorized American flag over a regularly commissioned vessel-of-war. This flag was of bunting, showing a pine-tree on a plain white ground, with the words "Liberty Tree" and "Appeal to God" prominently displayed. This flag was chiefly used until the adoption of the stars and stripes. The "rattlesnake flag," with a reptile in the act of striking, and the legend "Don't tread on me," was largely used by the privateers.

The year 1775 closed with but little activity upon the ocean. The ships of the regular navy were late in getting into commission, and an early winter impeded their usefulness. Some little work was done by privateers and the ships of the different colonies, and the ships of the British navy were kept fully occupied in guarding against the operations of these gentry. The man-of-war "Nautilus" chased an American privateer into a little cove near Beverly, and in the heat of the chase both vessels ran aground. The people on shore put off to the privateer, and quickly stripped her of her cordage and armament, and with the guns built a small battery by the water-side, from which they opened a telling fire upon the stranded "Nautilus." The man-of-war returned in kind, and did some slight damage to the town; but when the tide had risen she slipped her cables and departed. Such desultory encounters were of frequent occurrence, but no naval battles of any importance took place until the spring of 1776.

COMMODORE ESEK HOPKINS

## CHAPTER V.

EVENTS OF 1776.—THE FIRST CRUISE OF THE REGULAR NAVY.—THE "LEXINGTON" AND THE "EDWARD."—MUGFORD'S BRAVE FIGHT.—LOSS OF THE "YANKEE HERO."—CAPT. MANLY, AND THE "DEFENCE."—AMERICAN VESSELS IN EUROPEAN WATERS.—GOOD WORK OF THE "LEXINGTON" AND THE "REPRISAL."—THE BRITISH DEFEATED AT CHARLESTON.

THE year 1776 witnessed some good service done for the cause of liberty by the little colonial navy. The squadron, under the command of Ezekiel Hopkins, left the Delaware in February, as soon as the ice had left the river, and made a descent upon the island of New Providence, where the British had established a naval station. The force under Hopkins consisted of seven vessels-of-war, and one despatch-boat. The attack was successful in every way, a landing party of three hundred marines and sailors which was sent ashore meeting with but little resistance from the British garrison. By this exploit, the Americans captured over a hundred cannon, and a great quantity of naval stores.

After this exploit, Hopkins left New Providence, carrying away with him the governor and one or two notable citizens, and continued his

cruise. His course was shaped to the northward, and early in April he found himself off the shore of Long Island. He had picked up a couple of insignificant British vessels, — one a tender of six guns, and the other an eight-gun bomb-brig. But his cruise had been mainly barren of results; and his crew, who had looked forward to sharp service and plenty of prize-money, were beginning to grumble. But their inactivity was not of long duration; for, before daylight on the morning of April 6, the lookout at the masthead of the "Alfred" sighted a large ship, bearing down upon the American squadron. The night was clear and beautiful, the wind light, and the sea smooth; and so, although it lacked several hours to daylight, the commanders determined to give battle to the stranger. Soon, therefore, the roll of the drums beating to quarters was heard over the water, and the angry glare of the battle lanterns on the gun-decks made the open ports of the war-ships stand out like fiery eyes against the black hulls. The Englishman, who proved later to be the "Glasgow," twenty guns, carrying one hundred and fifty men, might easily have escaped; but, apparently undaunted by the odds against him, he awaited the attack. The little "Cabot" was the first American ship to open fire on the enemy. Her attack, though sharp and plucky, was injudicious; for two of the Englishman's heavy broadsides were enough to send her out of the battle for repairs. The "Glasgow" and the "Alfred" then took up the fight, and exchanged repeated broadsides; the American vessel suffering the more serious injuries of the two. After some hours of this fighting, the "Glasgow" hauled away, and made good her escape, although she was almost surrounded by the vessels of the American squadron. It would seem that only the most careless seamanship on the part of the Americans could have enabled a twenty-gun vessel to escape from four vessels, each one of which was singly almost a match for her. It is evident that the Continental Congress took the same view of the matter, for Hopkins was soon after dismissed from the service.

This action was little to the credit of the sailors of the colonial navy. Fortunately, a second action during the same month set them in a better light before the people of the country. This was the encounter of the "Lexington," Capt. Barry, with the British vessel "Edward," off the capes of Virginia. The two vessels were laid yard-arm to yard-arm;

and a hot battle ensued, in which the Americans came off the victors. The career of this little American brig was a rather remarkable one. The year following her capture of the "Edward," she was again off the capes of the Delaware, and again fell in with a British ship. This time, however, the Englishman was a frigate, and the luckless "Lexington" was forced to surrender. Her captor left the Americans aboard their own craft, and, putting a prize-crew aboard, ordered them to follow in the wake of the frigate. That night the Americans plotted the recapture of their vessel. By a concerted movement, they overpowered their captors; and the "Lexington" was taken into Baltimore, where she was soon recommissioned, and ordered to cruise in European waters.

Shortly after the battle between the "Lexington" and the "Edward," there was fought in Massachusetts Bay an action in which the Americans showed the most determined bravery, and which for the courage shown, and losses suffered on either side, may well be regarded as the most important of the naval battles of that year. Early in May, a merchant seaman named Mugford had succeeded, after great importunity, in securing the command of the armed vessel "Franklin," a small cruiser mounting only four guns. The naval authorities had been unwilling to give him the command, though he showed great zeal in pressing his suit. Indeed, after the appointment had been made, certain damaging rumors concerning the newly appointed captain reached the ears of the marine committee, and caused them to send an express messenger to Boston to cancel Mugford's commission. But the order arrived too late. Mugford had already fitted out his ship, and sailed. He had been but a few days at sea, when the British ship "Hope," of four hundred tons and mounting six guns, hove in sight. More than this, the lookout reported that the fleet of the British commodore Banks lay but a few miles away, and in plain sight. Many a man would have been daunted by such odds. Not so Capt. Mugford. Mustering his men, he showed them the British ship, told them that she carried heavier metal than the "Franklin," told them that the British fleet lay near at hand, and would doubtless try to take a hand in the engagement; then, having pointed out all the odds against them, he said, "Now, my lads, it's a desperate case; but we can take her, and win lots of glory and prize-money. Will you stand by me?"

The jackies wasted no time in debate, but, cheering lustily for the captain, went to their posts, and made ready for a hot fight. The naval discipline of the present day was little known, and less observed, at that time in the American navy. The perfect order which makes the gun-deck of a ship going into action as quiet and solemn as during Sunday prayers, then gave place to excited talk and bustle. The men stood in crews at the four guns; but most of the jackies were mustered on the forecastle, ready to board. All expected a desperate resistance. Great was their surprise, then, when they were permitted to take a raking position under the stern of the "Hope," and to board her without a shot being fired. But as Mugford, at the head of the boarders, clambered over the taffrail, he heard the captain of the "Hope" order the men to cut the topsail halliards and ties, with the intention of so crippling the ship that the British squadron might overhaul and recapture her.

"Avast there!" bawled Mugford, seeing through the plot in an instant, and clapping a pistol to the head of the captain; "if a knife is touched those ropes, not a man of this crew shall live."

This threat so terrified the captured sailors, that they relinquished their design; and Mugford, crowding all sail on his prize, soon was bowling along before a stiff breeze, with the British squadron in hot pursuit. An examination of the ship's papers showed her to be the most valuable prize yet taken by the Americans. In her hold were fifteen hundred barrels of powder, a thousand carbines, a great number of travelling carriages for cannon, and a most complete assortment of artillery instruments and pioneer tools. While running for Boston Harbor, through the channel known as Point Shirley gut, the vessel grounded, but was soon floated, and taken safely to her anchorage. Her arrival was most timely, as the American army was in the most dire straits for gunpowder. It may well be imagined that there was no longer any talk about revoking Capt. Mugford's commission.

Mugford remained in port only long enough to take a supply of powder from his prize; then put to sea again. He well knew that the British fleet that had chased him into Boston Harbor was still blockading the harbor's mouth, but he hoped to evade it by going out through a circuitous channel. Unluckily, in thus attempting to avoid the enemy, the "Franklin," ran aground, and there remained hard and fast in full view of the enemy.

He had as consort the privateer schooner "Lady Washington," whose captain, seeing Mugford's dangerous predicament, volunteered to remain near at hand and assist in the defence.

Mugford knew that his case was desperate, and made preparations for a most determined resistance. Swinging his craft around, he mounted all four of his guns on that side which commanded the channel in the direction from which the enemy was expected. Boarding-nettings were triced up, and strengthened with cables and cordage, to make an effective barrier against the assaults of boarders. The men were served with double rations of grog, and set to work sharpening the cutlasses and spears, with which they were well provided. The work of preparation was completed none too soon; for about nine o'clock Mugford heard the rattle of oars in rowlocks, and saw boats gliding towards the "Franklin" through the darkness.

"Boat ahoy!" he challenged. "Keep off, or I shall fire into you."

"Don't fire," was the response; "we are friends from Boston coming to your aid."

"We want none of your aid," cried Mugford with an oath. Then, turning to his crew, he shouted, "Let them have it, boys."

The roar of the cannon then mingled with the rattle of the musketry, the cries of the wounded, and the shouts and curses of the combatants, as the British strove to clamber up the sides of the "Franklin." Not less than two hundred men were engaged on the side of the British, who advanced to the fray in thirteen large barges, many of them carrying swivel guns. Several boats dashed in close under the side of the "Franklin," and their crews strove manfully to board, but were beaten back by the Yankees, who rained cutlass blows upon them. The long pikes with which the Americans were armed proved particularly effective. "One man with that weapon is positive of having killed nine of the enemy," says a newspaper of that day.

Unhappily, however, the heroic Mugford, while urging on his men to a more vigorous resistance, was struck by a musket-ball, which inflicted a mortal wound. At the moment the wound was received, he was reaching out over the quarter to catch hold of the mast of one of the barges, in the hope of upsetting her. As he fell to the deck, he called his first lieutenant, and said, "I am a dead man. Do not give up the vessel; you

will be able to beat them off." Nearly forty years after, the heroic Lawrence, dying on the deck of the "Chesapeake," repeated Mugford's words, "Don't give up the ship."

For about half an hour the battle raged fiercely. The British, beaten back with great loss, returned again and again to the attack. The boats would come under the lee of the "Franklin;" but, not being provided with grappling-irons, the British were forced to lay hold of the gunwales of the enemy with their hands, which the Americans promptly lopped off with their cutlasses. Shots from the swivel guns of the Yankee soon stove in two of the boats of the enemy, which sunk, carrying down many of their crew. After nearly an hour of this desperate fighting, the British withdrew, having lost about seventy men. The only loss sustained by the Americans was that of their brave commander Mugford.

About a month after this battle, there occurred off the coast of Massachusetts a battle in which the Americans, though they fought with the most undaunted bravery, were forced to strike their colors to their adversary. The American was the privateer "Yankee Hero" of Newburyport. She sailed from that place for Boston on the 7th of June with only forty men aboard, intending to ship her full complement of one hundred and twenty at Boston. As the "Hero" rounded Cape Ann, she sighted a sail on the horizon, but in her short-handed condition did not think it worth while to give chase. The stranger, however, had caught sight of the "Hero;" and, a fresh southerly breeze springing up, she began to close with the American. As she came closer, Capt. Tracy of the "Yankee Hero" saw that she was a ship-of-war. Despite the desperate efforts of the Americans to escape, their pursuer rapidly overhauled them, and soon coming up within half a mile, opened fire with her bow chasers. The brig returned the fire with a swivel gun, which had little effect. Seeing this, Capt. Tracy ordered the firing to cease until the ships should came to close quarters. The stranger rapidly overhauled the privateer, keeping up all the time a vigorous fire. Tracy with difficulty restrained the ardor of his men, who were anxious to try to cripple their pursuer. When the enemy came within pistol-shot, Tracy saw that the time for action on his part had come, and immediately opened fire with all the guns and small-arms that could be brought to bear. The only possible chance for escape lay in crippling the big craft with a lucky shot; but

broadside after broadside was fired, and still the great ship came rushing along in the wake of the flying privateer. Closer and closer drew the bulky man-of-war, until her bow crept past the stern of the "Yankee Hero," and the marines upon her forecastle poured down a destructive volley of musketry upon the brig's crowded deck. The plight of the privateer was now a desperate one. Her heavy antagonist was close alongside, and towered high above her, so that the marines on the quarter-deck and forecastle of the Englishman were on a level with the leading blocks of the Yankee. From the depressed guns of the frigate, a murderous fire poured down upon the smaller craft. For an hour and twenty minutes the two vessels continued the fight, pouring hot broadsides into each other, and separated by less than a hundred feet of water. The brisk breeze blowing carried away the clouds of smoke, and left the men on the deck of the Yankee no protection from sharp-shooters on the enemy's deck. Accordingly, the execution was frightful. Tracy, from his post on the quarter-deck, saw his men falling like sheep, while the continual volleys of the great ship had so cut the cordage of the weaker vessel that escape was impossible. At last a musket-ball struck Capt. Tracy in the thigh, and he fell bleeding to the deck. For a moment his men wavered at their guns; but he called manfully to them, from where he lay, to fight on boldly for the honor of the "Yankee Hero." Two petty officers had rushed to his assistance; and he directed them to lay him upon a chest of arms upon the quarter-deck, whence he might direct the course of the battle. But, strong though was his spirit, his body was too weak to perform the task he had allotted it; and, growing faint from pain and loss of blood, he was carried below.

He lay unconscious for a few minutes, but was recalled to his senses by the piteous cries of wounded men by whom he was surrounded. When he came to himself, he saw the cabin filled with grievously wounded people, bleeding and suffering for lack of surgical aid. The firing of the privateer had ceased, but the enemy was still pouring in pitiless broadsides. Enraged at this spectacle, Capt. Tracy ordered his men to re-open the conflict, and directed that he be taken in a chair to the quarter-deck. But, on getting into the chair, he was suddenly seized with a fainting spell, and gave orders, by signs, that the colors be struck.

When the inequality of the two enemies is considered, this action

appears to be a most notable reason for pride in the powers of the Americans. The "Yankee Hero" was a low single-decked vessel of fourteen guns, while her captor was the British frigate of thirty-two guns. Yet the little American vessel had held her own for two hours, and by good gunnery and skilful manœuvring had succeeded in doing almost as much damage as she had suffered.

In reading of the naval engagements of the Revolution, one is impressed with the small sacrifice of life that attended the most protracted conflicts. Thus in the action just recorded only four men were killed upon the defeated ship, although for more than an hour the two vessels had exchanged broadsides a distance of less than a hundred feet apart. The execution done on the British frigate has never been recorded, but was probably even less.

Only the most fragmentary account can be given of any naval actions in the year 1776, except those in which America's great naval hero Paul Jones took part. Of the trivial encounters that go to complete the naval annals of the year, only the briefest recountal is necessary. The work of the little brig "Andrea Doria," Capt. Biddle, deserves a passing mention. This little fourteen-gun craft had the most wonderful luck in making prizes. Besides capturing two transports loaded with British soldiers, she took so many merchantmen, that on one cruise she brought back to port only five of her original crew, the rest having all been put aboard prizes.

On the 17th of June, the crew of the Connecticut cruiser "Defence," a fourteen-gun brig, heard the sound of distant cannonading coming faintly over the water. All sail was crowded upon the brig, and she made all possible speed to the scene of conflict. About nightfall, she fell in with four American schooners that had just been having a tussle with two heavy British transports. Three of the American vessels were privateers, the fourth was the little cruiser "Lee" in which Capt. John Manly had done such brilliant service. The four schooners had found the transports too powerful for them, and had therefore drawn off, but were eager to renew the fray with the help of the "Defence." Accordingly the "Defence" led the way to Nantasket Roads, where the transports lay at anchor. Capt. Harding wasted little time in manœuvring, but, laying his vessel alongside the larger of the two transports, summoned her commander to strike.

"Ay, ay — I'll strike," was the response from the threatened vessel; and instantly a heavy broadside was poured into the "Defence." A sharp action followed, lasting for nearly an hour. The "Defence" bore the brunt of the conflict, for the four schooners did not come to sufficiently close quarters to be of much assistance against the enemy. The gunnery of the Americans proved too much for the enemy, however; and after losing eighteen men, together with a large number wounded, the British surrendered. The American vessel was a good deal cut up aloft, and lost nine of her men. The next morning a third transport was sighted by the "Defence," and speedily overhauled and captured. More than five hundred British soldiers were thus captured; and the British thenceforward dared not treat the Americans as rebels, lest the colonial army authorities should retaliate upon the British prisoners in their hands.

It was in the year 1776 that the first naval vessel giving allegiance to the American Colonies showed herself in European waters. This vessel was the "Reprisal," Capt. Wickes, a small craft, mounting sixteen guns. Early in the summer of '76, the "Reprisal" made a cruise to Martinique, taking several prizes. When near the island, she encountered the British sloop-of-war "Shark," and a sharp battle ensued. In size and weight of metal, the two vessels were about evenly matched; but the "Reprisal" had been sending out so many prize-crews, that she was short eighty men of her full crew. Therefore, when, after a brisk interchange of broadsides, the British sloop sheered off, and left the "Reprisal" to continue her course, Capt. Wickes rejoiced in his escape as being almost equal to a victory.

After completing this cruise, the "Reprisal" was ordered to France for the purpose of conveying thither from Philadelphia Benjamin Franklin, the ambassador sent from the Colonies to interest the French in the cause of American liberty. While on the way over, she took two or three prizes, which were sold in France. After landing her distinguished passenger, she cruised about in the proverbially tempestuous Bay of Biscay, where she forced several British vessels to strike to the American flag, then first seen in those waters. On returning to France to sell his newly captured prizes, Capt. Wickes found trouble in store for him. The British ambassador at Paris had declared that the American cruiser was a detestable pirate; and that for France to permit

the pirate to anchor in her harbors, or sell his prizes in her markets, was equal to a declaration of war against England. Wickes was, therefore, admonished to take his ships and prisoners away. But even in that early day Yankee wit was sharp, and able to extricate its possessor from troublesome scrapes. Wickes knew that there were plenty of purchasers to be had for his prizes: so, gathering a few ship-owners together, he took them out to sea beyond the jurisdiction of France, and there sold them to the highest bidder.

The money thus obtained Wickes used in purchasing vessels suitable for armed cruisers. While these were fitting out, the "Lexington" and the "Dolphin" arrived in France, and soon joined the "Reprisal" in a cruise around the British Islands. The little squadron fairly swept the Channel and the Irish Sea of merchantmen. The excitement in England ran high, and the admiralty despatched all the available men-of-war in search of the marauders. But the swift-sailing cruisers escaped all pursuers. Once indeed the "Reprisal" came near falling into the hands of the enemy, but escaped by throwing overboard every thing movable, sawing away her bulwarks, and even cutting away her heavy timbers.

The result of this cruise so aroused England, that France no longer dared to harbor the audacious Yankee cruisers. The "Lexington" and "Reprisal" were, therefore, ordered to leave European waters forthwith. The "Lexington" complied first, and when one day out from the port of Morlaix encountered the British man-of-war cutter "Alert." The "Alert" was the smaller of the two vessels, but her commander had in him all that pluck and those sterling seamanlike qualities that made the name of England great upon the ocean. A stiff breeze was blowing, and a heavy cross sea running, when the two vessels came together. The gunners sighted their pieces at random and fired, knowing little whether the shot would go plunging into the waves, or fly high into the air. As a result, they carried on a spirited cannonade for upwards of two hours, with the sole effect of carrying away the top hamper of the "Alert," and exhausting most of the powder on the American craft.

Finding his ammunition rapidly giving out, the captain of the "Lexington" clapped on all sail, and soon showed his crippled

antagonist a clean pair of heels. But so great was the activity of the crew of the "Alert." that they repaired the damage done aloft, and in four hours overtook the "American," and opened fire upon her. The battle now became one-sided; for the "Lexington," being short of powder, could make little resistance to the brisk attack of her persevering adversary. In less than an hour she was forced to strike her flag.

The fate of the "Reprisal" was even harder than that of her consort. While crossing the Atlantic on her way back to the coast of America, she was overtaken by a furious gale. With furled sails and battened hatches, the little craft made a desperate fight for life. But the fierce wind carried away her masts and spars, and the tossing waves opened her seams, so that it became apparent to all on board that the fate of the gallant craft, that had so nobly defended the cause of American liberty, was sealed. As the water rose higher and higher in the hold, the officers saw that it was no longer a question of the possibility of saving the ship, but that their lives and those of the crew were in the greatest danger. Boats were lowered; but the angry white-capped waves tossed them madly aloft, and, turning them over and over, sent the poor fellows that manned them to their long account. All hands then set to work at the construction of a huge raft; and just as the ship's stern settled, it was pushed off, and all that could reach it clambered on. A few poor fellows clung to the sinking ship; and their comrades on the raft saw them crowd on the forecastle, and heard their despairing cries as the good ship threw her prow high in the air, and sunk stern foremost to the placid depths of the stormy ocean. But those on the raft were not destined to escape the fate of their comrades. The haggard sufferers were doomed to see the frail structure on which their lives depended go slowly to pieces before the mighty power of the remorseless sea. Bit by bit their foothold vanished from beneath them. One by one they were swept off into the seething cauldron of the storm. At last but one man remained, the cook of the ill-fated vessel, who floated about for three days on a piece of wreckage, until, half-starved and nearly crazed, he was picked up by a passing vessel, and told the tale of the wreck. So ended the career of the patriotic and gallant Capt. Wickes and

his crew, and such is the fate that every stout fellow braves when he dons his blue jacket and goes to serve his country on the ocean.

In addition to the exploits of the American cruisers upon the high seas, certain operations of the British navy along the American coast during the year 1776, demand attention. Of these the most important was the attack by Sir Peter Parker upon Charleston, in September of that year, — an attack made memorable by the determined courage of the Americans, the daring exploit of Sergt. Jasper, and the discovery of the remarkable qualities of palmetto logs as a material for fortifications.

Charleston was then a town of but a few thousand inhabitants; but, small as it was, it had become particularly obnoxious to the British on account of the strong revolutionary sentiment of its people, and their many open acts of defiance of King George's authority. When the offensive Stamp Act first was published, the people of Charleston rose in revolt; and the stamps for the city being stored in an armed fortress in the bay, known as Castle Johnson, a party of a hundred and fifty armed men went down the bay, surprised the garrison, captured the castle, and, loading its guns, defied the authorities. Not until the promise had been made that the stamps should be sent back to England, did the rebellious Carolinians lay down their arms. Nor was their peace of long duration. When the news of the battle of Lexington reached the little Southern seaport, the people straightway cast about for an opportunity to strike a blow against the tyranny of England. The opportunity soon offered itself. An English sloop laden with powder was lying at St. Augustine, Fla. Learning this, the people of Charleston fitted out a vessel, which captured the powder-ship, and, eluding a number of British cruisers, returned safely to Charleston with fifteen thousand pounds of gunpowder for the colonial army. Soon after the colonial troops took possession of the forts in the harbor, and Charleston became a revolutionary stronghold.

Therefore, when the war authorities of Great Britain prepared to take active, offensive measures against the seaport cities of the rebellious colonies, Charleston was one of the first points chosen for attack. It was on the 4th of June, 1776, that the British fleet, under the command of the veteran admiral, Sir Peter Parker, appeared off Charleston bar. The colonists had learned of its approach some time before; and the town was crowded with troops, both regular and volunteer. Two forts,

Johnson and Sullivan, were erected at points commanding the entrance to the harbor. Troops were thrown out to oppose the advance of landing parties. The wharves were covered with breastworks, and the streets leading up from the water-side were barricaded. There was a great scarceness of lead for bullets; and to supply that need the leaden sashes, in which window-panes were at that time set, were melted down. When the fleet of the enemy appeared in the offing, Charleston was quite ready to give the invaders a warm reception.

Fort Sullivan was the chief work in the harbor, and against this Parker began a vigorous cannonade early on the morning of the 28th of June. The fort had been built of logs of palmetto wood, and was looked upon with some distrust by its defenders, who did not know how well that material could withstand cannon-shot; but the opening volley of the fleet re-assured them. The balls penetrated deep in the soft, spongy wood without detaching any of the splinters, which, in a battle, are more dangerous than the shot themselves. The fort soon replied to the fire of the fleet; and the thunder of three hundred cannon rang out over the bay, while dense clouds of sulphurous smoke hid the scene from the eager gaze of the crowds of people on the housetops of the city.

When the stately ships of the British squadron swung into line before the little wooden fort, there was hardly a sailor who did not take his station without a feeling of contempt for the insignificant obstacle that they were about to sweep from their path. But as the day wore on, and the ceaseless cannonade seemed to have no effect on the bastions of the fort, the case began to look serious.

"Mind the commodore, and the fifty-gun ships," was the command Moultrie gave to the gunners in the fort when the action commenced, and right well did they heed the injunction. The quarter-decks of the ships-of-the-line were swept clean of officers. The gunners in the fort soon found that the fire of the enemy was doing little or no execution, and they sighted their guns as coolly as though out for a day's target practice. The huge iron balls crashed through the hulls of the ships, or swept their decks, doing terrific execution. The cable of the "Bristol" was shot away, and she swung round with her stern to the fort. In this position she was raked repeatedly; her captain was killed, and at one time not an officer remained on her quarter-deck except the admiral

Sir Peter Parker. When the conflict ceased, this ship alone contained forty killed and seventy-one wounded men. The other ships suffered nearly as severely. The twenty-eight-gun ship "Actæon" grounded during the course of the engagement; and when, after ten hours' fruitless cannonading, the British abandoned the task of reducing the fort, and determined to withdraw, she was found to be immovable. Accordingly Admiral Parker signalled to her officer to abandon the ship, and set her on fire. This was accordingly done; and the ship was left with her colors flying, and her guns loaded. This movement was observed by the Americans, who, in spite of the danger of an explosion, boarded the ship, fired her guns at the "Bristol," loaded three boats with stores, and pulled away, leaving the "Actæon" to blow up, which she did half an hour later.

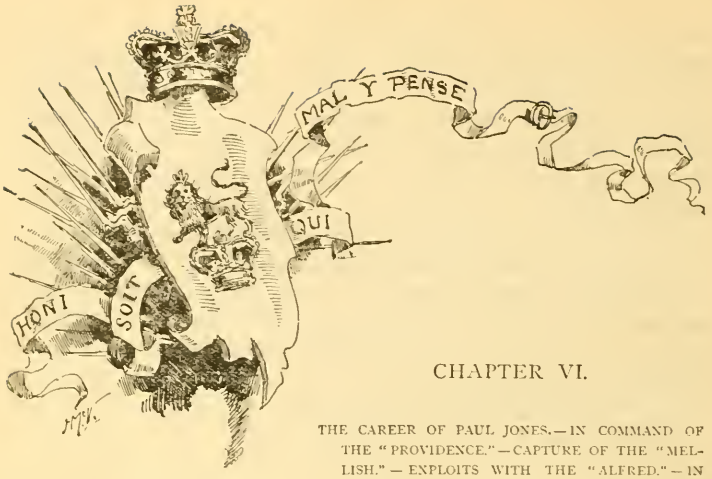
While the battle was at its hottest, and the shot and shell were flying thick over the fort, the flagstaff was shot away; and the flag of South Carolina, a blue ground, bearing a silver crescent, fell on the beach outside the parapet. Sergt. William Jasper, seeing this, leaped on the bastion, walked calmly through the storm of flying missiles, picked up the flag, and fastened it upon a sponge-staff. Then standing upon the highest point of the parapet, in full view of the ships and the men in the fort, he calmly fixed the staff upright, and returned to his place, leaving the flag proudly waving. The next day the governor of the colony visited the fort, and seeking out the brave sergeant, handed him a handsome sword and a lieutenant's commission. But Jasper proved to be as modest as he was brave; for he declined the proffered promotion, with the remark, —

"I am not fit to keep officers' company; I am but a sergeant."

The complete failure of the attack upon Charleston was a bitter pill for the English to swallow. They had brought against the raw, untrained forces of the colony some of the finest ships of the boasted navy of Great Britain. They had fought well and pluckily. The fact that Sir Peter Parker was in command was in itself a guaranty that the attack would be a spirited one; and the tremendous loss of life in the fleet affords convincing proof that no poltroonery lurked among the British sailors. The loss of the British during the engagement, in killed and wounded, amounted to two hundred and twenty-five men. The Americans

had ten men killed and twenty-two wounded. Moultrie, the commandant of the fort, says that after the battle was over they picked up more than twelve hundred solid shot of different sizes, and many thirteen-inch shells. Most of the shells that fell within the fort fell into a large pool of water, which extinguished their fuses, thus robbing them of their power for evil.

In his report of this battle, Admiral Parker fell into a queer error. He reports that a large party of men entering the fort met a man going out, whom they straightway hanged to a neighboring tree, in full view of the fleet. From this the admiral concluded that there was an incipient mutiny in the fort, and the ringleader was hanged as an example. Col. Moultrie, however, explained this by stating that the man hanging in the tree was simply the coat of a soldier, which had been carried away by a cannon-shot, and left hanging in the branches.




# CHAPTER VI.

THE CAREER OF PAUL JONES. — IN COMMAND OF THE "PROVIDENCE." — CAPTURE OF THE "MELLISH." — EXPLOITS WITH THE "ALFRED." — IN COMMAND OF THE "RANGER." — SWEEPING THE ENGLISH CHANNEL. — THE DESCENT UPON WHITEHAVEN.

WE HAVE already spoken of the farcical affair between the fleet under Ezekiel Hopkins and the English frigate "Glasgow," in which the English vessel, by superior seamanship, and taking advantage of the blunders of the Americans, escaped capture. The primary result of this battle was to cause the dismissal from the service of Hopkins. But his dismissal led to the advancement of a young naval officer, whose name became one of the most glorious in American naval annals, and whose fame as a skilful seaman has not been tarnished by the hand of time.

At the time of the escape of the "Glasgow," there was serving upon the "Alfred" a young lieutenant, by name John Paul Jones. Jones was a Scotchman. His rightful name was John Paul; but for some reason, never fully understood, he had assumed the surname of Jones, and his record under the name of Paul Jones forms one of the most glorious chapters of American naval history. When given a lieutenant's commission in the colonial navy, Jones was twenty-nine years old. From the day when a lad of thirteen years he shipped for his first voyage, he had spent

CAPTAIN JOHN PAUL JONES QUELLING THE MOB
AT WHITE HAVEN, SCOTLAND, NOV., 1777

his life on the ocean. He had served on peaceful merchantmen, and in the less peaceful, but at that time equally respectable, slave-trade. A small inheritance had enabled him to assume the station of a Virginia gentleman; and he had become warmly attached to American ideas and principles, and at the outbreak of the Revolution put his services at the command of Congress. He was first offered a captain's commission with the command of the "Providence," mounting twelve guns and carrying one hundred men. But with extraordinary modesty the young sailor declined, saying that he hardly felt himself fitted to discharge the duties of a first lieutenant. The lieutenant's commission, however, he accepted; and it was in this station that with his own hands he hoisted the first American flag to the masthead of the "Alfred."

The wretched fiasco which attended the attack of the American fleet upon the "Glasgow" was greatly deplored by Jones. However, he refrained from any criticism upon his superiors, and sincerely regretted the finding of the court of inquiry, by which the captain of the "Providence" was dismissed the service, and Lieut. Paul Jones recommended to fill the vacancy.

The duties which devolved upon Capt. Jones were manifold and arduous. The ocean was swarming with powerful British men-of-war, which in his little craft he must avoid, while keeping a sharp outlook for foemen with whom he was equally matched. More than once, from the masthead of the "Providence," the lookout could discover white sails of one or more vessels, any one of which, with a single broadside, could have sent the audacious Yankee to the bottom. But luckily the "Providence" was a fast sailer, and wonderfully obedient to her helm. To her good sailing qualities, and to his own admirable seamanship, Jones owed more than one fortunate escape. Once, when almost overtaken by a powerful man-of-war, he edged away until he brought his pursuer on his weather quarter; then, putting his helm up suddenly, he stood dead before the wind, thus doubling on his course, and running past his adversary within pistol-shot of her guns, but in a course directly opposite to that upon which she was standing. The heavy war-ship went plunging ahead like a heavy hound eluded by the agile fox, and the Yankee proceeded safely on her course.

Some days later the "Providence" was lying to on the great banks

near the Isle of Sables. It was a holiday for the crew; for no sails were in sight, and Capt. Jones had indulgently allowed them to get out their cod-lines and enjoy an afternoon's fishing. In the midst of their sport, as they were hauling in the finny monsters right merrily, the hail of the lookout warned them that a strange sail was in sight. The stranger drew rapidly nearer, and was soon made out to be a war-vessel. Jones, finding after a short trial that his light craft could easily outstrip the lumbering man-of-war, managed to keep just out of reach. Now and then the pursuer would luff up and let fly a broadside; the shot skipping along over the waves, but sinking before they reached the "Providence." Jones, who had an element of humor in his character, responded to this cannonade with one musket, which, with great solemnity, was discharged in response to each broadside. After keeping up this burlesque battle for some hours, the "Providence" spread her sails, and soon left her foe hull down beneath the horizon.

After having thus eluded his pursuer, Jones skirted the coast of Cape Breton, and put into the harbor of Canso, where he found three British fishing schooners lying at anchor. The inhabitants of the little fishing village were electrified to see the "Providence" cast anchor in the harbor, and, lowering her boats, send two crews of armed sailors to seize the British craft. No resistance was made, however; and the Americans burned one schooner, scuttled a second, and after filling the third with fish, taken from the other two, took her out of the harbor with the "Providence" leading the way.

From the crew of the captured vessel, Jones learned that at the Island of Madame, not far from Canso, there was a considerable flotilla of British merchantmen. Accordingly he proceeded thither with the intention of destroying them. On arriving, he found the harbor too shallow to admit the "Providence;" and accordingly taking up a position from which he could, with his cannon, command the harbor, he despatched armed boats' crews to attack the shipping. On entering the harbor, the Americans found nine British vessels lying at anchor. Ships and brigs, as well as small fishing schooners, were in the fleet. It was a rich prize for the Americans, and it was won without bloodshed; for the peaceful fishermen offered no resistance to the Yankees, and looked upon the capture of their vessels with amazement. The condition of these poor

men, thus left on a bleak coast with no means of escape, appealed strongly to Jones's humanity. He therefore told them, that, if they would assist him in making ready for sea such of the prizes as he wished to take with him, he would leave them vessels enough to carry them back to England. The fishermen heartily agreed to the proposition, and worked faithfully for several days at the task of fitting out the captured vessels. The night before the day on which Jones had intended leaving the harbor, the wind came on to blow, and a violent storm of wind and rain set in. Even the usually calm surface of the little harbor was lashed to fury by the shrieking wind. The schooner "Sea-Flower" — one of the captured prizes — was torn from her moorings; and though her crew got out the sweeps, and struggled valiantly for headway against the driving storm, she drifted on shore, and lay there a total wreck. The schooner "Ebenezer," which Jones had brought from Canso laden with fish, drifted on a sunken reef, and was there so battered by the roaring waves that she went to pieces. Her crew, after vainly striving to launch the boats, built a raft, and saved themselves on that.

The next day the storm abated; and Capt. Jones, taking with him three heavily laden prizes, left the harbor, and turned his ship's prow homeward. The voyage to Newport, then the headquarters of the little navy, was made without other incident than the futile chase of three British ships, which ran into the harbor of Louisbourg. On his arrival, Jones reported that he had been cruising for forty-seven days, and in that time had captured sixteen prizes, beside the fishing-vessels he burned at Cape Breton. Eight of his prizes he had manned, and sent into port; the remainder he had burned. It was the first effective blow the colonists had yet struck at their powerful foe upon the ocean.

Hardly had Paul Jones completed this first cruise, when his mind, ever active in the service of his country, suggested to him a new enterprise in which he might contribute to the cause of American liberty. At this early period of the Revolution, the British were treating American prisoners with almost inconceivable barbarity. Many were sent to the "Old Jersey" prison-ship, of whose horrors we shall read something later on. Others, to the number of about a hundred, were taken to Cape Breton, and forced to labor like Russian felons in the underground coal-mines. Jones's plan was bold in its conception, but needed only energy and promptitude to make it perfectly feasible.

He besought the authorities to give him command of a squadron, that he might move on Cape Breton, destroy the British coal and fishing vessels always congregated there, and liberate the hapless Americans who were passing their lives in the dark misery of underground mining. His plan was received with favor, but the authorities lacked the means to give him the proper aid. However, two vessels, the "Alfred" and the "Providence," were assigned to him; and he went speedily to work to prepare for the adventure. At the outset, he was handicapped by lack of men. The privateers were then fitting out in every port; and seamen saw in privateering easier service, milder discipline, and greater profits than they could hope for in the regular navy. When, by hard work, the muster-roll of the "Alfred" showed her full complement of men shipped, the stormy month of November had arrived, and the golden hour for success was past.

Nevertheless, Jones, taking command of the "Alfred," and putting the "Providence" in the command of Capt. Hacker, left Newport, and laid his course to the northward. When he arrived off the entrance to the harbor of Louisbourg, he was so lucky as to encounter an English brig, the "Mellish," which, after a short resistance, struck her flag. She proved to be laden with heavy warm clothing for the British troops in Canada. This capture was a piece of great good fortune for the Americans, and many a poor fellow in Washington's army that winter had cause to bless Paul Jones for his activity and success.

The day succeeding the capture of the "Mellish" dawned gray and cheerless. Light flurries of snow swept across the waves, and by noon a heavy snowstorm, driven by a violent north-east gale, darkened the air, and lashed the waves into fury. Jones stood dauntless at his post on deck, encouraging the sailors by cheery words, and keeping the sturdy little vessel on her course. All day and night the storm roared; and when, the next morning, Jones, wearied by his ceaseless vigilance, looked anxiously across the waters for his consort, she was not to be seen. The people on the "Alfred" supposed, of course, that the "Providence" was lost, with all on board, and mourned the sad fate of their comrades. But, in fact, Capt. Hacker, affrighted by the storm, had basely deserted his leader during the night, and made off for Newport, leaving Jones to prosecute his enterprise alone.

Jones recognized in this desertion the knell of the enterprise upon which he had embarked. Nevertheless, he disdained to return to port; so sending the "Mellish" and a second prize which the British afterwards recaptured, back to Massachusetts, he continued his cruise along the Nova Scotia coast. Again he sought out the harbor of Canso, and, entering it, found a large English transport laden with provisions aground just inside the bar. Boats' crews from the "Alfred" soon set the torch to the stranded ship, and then, landing, fired a huge warehouse filled with whale-oil and the products of the fisheries. Leaving the blazing pile behind, the "Alfred" put out again into the stormy sea, and made for the northward.

As he approached Louisbourg, Jones fell in with a considerable fleet of British coal-vessels, in convoy of the frigate "Flora." A heavy fog hung over the ocean; and the fleet Yankee, flying here and there, was able to cut out and capture three of the vessels without alarming the frigate, that continued unsuspectingly on her course. Two days later, Jones snapped up a Liverpool privateer, that fired scarcely a single gun in resistance. Then crowded with prisoners, embarrassed by prizes, and short of food and water, the "Alfred turned her course homeward.

Five valuable prizes sailed in her wake. Anxiety for the safety of these gave Jones no rest by day or night. He was ceaselessly on the watch lest some hostile man-of-war should overhaul his fleet, and force him to abandon his hard-won fruits of victory. All went well until, when off St. George's Bank, he encountered the frigate "Milford," — the same craft to whose cannon-balls Jones, but a few months before, had tauntingly responded with musket-shots.

It was late in the afternoon when the "Milford" was sighted; and Jones, seeing that she could by no possibility overtake his squadron before night, ordered his prizes to continue their course without regard to any lights or apparent signals from the "Alfred." When darkness fell upon the sea, the Yankees were scudding along on the starboard tack, with the Englishman coming bravely up astern. From the tops of the "Alfred" swung two burning lanterns, which the enemy doubtless pronounced a bit of beastly stupidity on the part of the Yankee, affording, as it did, an excellent guide for the pursuer to steer by. But during the night the wily Jones changed his course. The prizes, with

the exception of the captured privateer, continued on the starboard tack. The "Alfred" and the privateer made off on the port tack, with the "Milford" in full cry in their wake. Not until the morning dawned did the Englishman discover how he had been tricked.

Having thus secured the safety of his prizes, it only remained for Jones to escape with the privateer. Unluckily, however, the officer put in charge of the privateer proved incapable, and his craft fell into hands of the British. Jones, however, safely carried the "Alfred" clear of the "Milford's" guns, and, a heavy storm coming up, soon eluded his foe in the snow and darkness. Thereupon he shaped his course for Boston, where he arrived on the 5th of December, 1776. Had he been delayed two days longer, both his provisions and his water would have been exhausted.

For the ensuing six months Jones remained on shore, not by any means inactive, for his brain was teeming with great projects for his country's service. He had been deprived of the command of the "Alfred," and another ship was not easily to be found: so he turned his attention to questions of naval organization, and the results of many of his suggestions are observable in the United States navy to-day. It was not until June 14, 1777, that a command was found for him. This was the eighteen-gun ship "Ranger," built to carry a frigate's battery of twenty-six guns. She had been built for the revolutionary government, at Portsmouth, and was a stanch-built, solid craft, though miserably slow and somewhat crank. Jones, though disappointed with the sailing qualities of the craft, was nevertheless vastly delighted to be again in command of a man-of-war, and wasted no time in getting her ready for sea.

It so happened, that, on the very day Paul Jones received his commission as commander of the "Ranger," the Continental Congress adopted the Stars and Stripes for the national flag. Jones, anticipating this action, had prepared a flag in accordance with the proposed designs, and, upon hearing of the action of Congress, had it run to the masthead, while the cannon of the "Ranger" thundered out their deep-mouthed greetings to the starry banner destined to wave over the most glorious nation of the earth. Thus it happened that the same hand that had given the pine-tree banner to the winds was the first to fling out to the breezes the bright folds of the Stars and Stripes.

Early in October the "Ranger" left Portsmouth, and made for the coast of France. Astute agents of the Americans in that country were having a fleet, powerful frigate built there for Jones, which he was to take, leaving the sluggish "Ranger" to be sold. But, on his arrival at Nantes, Jones was grievously disappointed to learn that the British Government had so vigorously protested against the building of a vessel-of-war in France for the Americans, that the French Government had been obliged to notify the American agents that their plan must be abandoned. France was at this time at peace with Great Britain, and, though inclined to be friendly with the rebellious colonies, was not ready to entirely abandon her position as a neutral power. Later, when she took up arms against England, she gave the Americans every right in her ports they could desire.

Jones thus found himself in European waters with a vessel too weak to stand against the frigates England could send to take her, and too slow to elude them. But he determined to strike some effective blows for the cause of liberty. Accordingly he planned an enterprise, which, for audacity of conception and dash in execution, has never been equalled by any naval expedition since.

This was nothing less than a virtual invasion of England. The "Ranger" lay at Brest. Jones planned to dash across the English Channel, and cruise along the coast of England, burning shipping and towns, as a piece of retaliation upon the British for their wanton outrages along the American coast. It was a bold plan. The channel was thronged with the heavy frigates of Great Britain, any one of which could have annihilated the audacious Yankee cruiser. Nevertheless, Jones determined to brave the danger.

At the outset, it seemed as though his purpose was to be balked by heavy weather. For days after the "Ranger" left Brest, she battled against the chop-seas of the English Channel. The sky was dark, and the light of the sun obscured by gray clouds. The wind whistled through the rigging, and tore at the tightly furled sails. Great green walls of water, capped with snowy foam, beat thunderously against the sides of the "Ranger." Now and then a port would be driven in, and the men between decks drenched by the incoming deluge. The "Ranger" had encountered an equinoctial gale in its worst form.

When the gale died away, Jones found himself off the Scilly Islands, in full view of the coast of England. Here he encountered a merchantman, which he took and scuttled, sending the crew ashore to spread the news that an American man-of-war was ravaging the channel. Having alarmed all England, he changed his hunting-ground to St. George's Channel and the Irish Sea, where he captured several ships; sending one, a prize, back to Brest. He was in waters with which he had been familiar from his youth, and he made good use of his knowledge; dashing here and there, lying in wait in the highway of commerce, and then secreting himself in some sequestered cove while the enemy's ship-of-war went by in fruitless search for the marauder. All England was aroused by the exploits of the Yankee cruiser. Never since the days of the Invincible Armada had war been so brought home to the people of the tight little island. Long had the British boastfully claimed the title of monarch of the seas. Long had they sung the vainglorious song, —

> "Britannia needs no bulwarks,
> No towers along the steep;
> Her march is o'er the mountain waves,
> Her home is on the deep."

But Paul Jones showed Great Britain that her boasted power was a bubble. He ravaged the seas within cannon-shot of English headlands He captured and burned merchantmen, drove the rates of insurance up to panic prices, paralyzed British shipping-trade, and even made small incursions into British territory.

The reports that reached Jones of British barbarity along the American coast, of the burning of Falmouth, of tribute levied on innumerable seaport towns, — all aroused in him a determination to strike a retaliatory blow. Whitehaven, a small seaport, was the spot chosen by him for attack; and he brought his ship to off the mouth of the harbor late one night, intending to send in a boat's crew to fire the shipping. But so strong a wind sprung up, as to threaten to drive the ship ashore; and Jones was forced to make sail, and get an offing. A second attempt, made upon a small harbor called Lochryan, on the western coast of Scotland, was defeated by a like cause.

But the expedition against Lochryan, though in itself futile, was the

means of giving Jones an opportunity to show his merits as a fighter. Soon after leaving Lochryan, he entered the bay of Carrichfergus, on which is situated the Irish commercial city of Belfast. The bay was constantly filled with merchantmen; and the "Ranger," with her ports closed, and her warlike character carefully disguised, excited no suspicion aboard a trim, heavy-built craft that lay at anchor a little farther up the bay. This craft was the British man-of-war "Drake," mounting twenty guns. Soon after his arrival in the bay, Jones learned the character of the "Drake," and determined to attempt her capture during the night. Accordingly he dropped anchor near by, and, while carefully concealing the character of his craft, made every preparation for a midnight fight. The men sat between decks, sharpening cutlasses, and cleaning and priming their pistols; the cannon were loaded with grape, and depressed for work at close quarters; battle lanterns were hung in place, ready to be lighted at the signal for action.

At ten o'clock, the tramp of men about the capstan gave notice that the anchor was being brought to the catheads. Soon the creaking of cordage, and the snapping of the sails, told that the fresh breeze was being caught by the spreading sails. Then the waves rippled about the bow of the ship, and the "Ranger" was fairly under way.

It was a pitch-dark night, but the lights on board the "Drake" showed where she was lying. On the "Ranger" all lights were extinguished, and no noise told of her progress towards her enemy. It was the captain's plan to run his vessel across the "Drake's" cable, drop his own anchor, let the "Ranger" swing alongside the Englishman, and then fight it out at close quarters. But this plan, though well laid, failed of execution. The anchor was not let fall in season; and the "Ranger," instead of bringing up alongside her enemy, came to anchor half a cable-length astern. The swift-flowing tide and the fresh breeze made it impossible to warp the ship alongside: so Jones ordered the cable cut, and the "Ranger" scudded down the bay before the ever-freshening gale. It does not appear that the people on the "Drake" were aware of the danger they so narrowly escaped.

The wind that had aided the tide in defeating Jones's enterprise blew stronger and stronger, and before morning the sea was tossing before a regular north-east gale. Against it the "Ranger" could

make no headway: so Jones gave his ship her head, and scudded before the wind until within the vicinity of Whitehaven, when he determined to again attempt to destroy the shipping in that port. This time he was successful. Bringing the "Ranger" to anchor near the bar, Capt Jones called for volunteers to accompany him on the expedition. He himself was to be their leader; for as a boy he had often sailed in and out of the little harbor, knew where the forts stood, and where the colliers anchored most thickly. The landing party was divided into two boat-loads; Jones taking command of one, while Lieut. Wallingford held the tiller of the other boat. With muffled oars the Americans made for the shore, the boats' keels grated upon the pebbly shore, and an instant later the adventurers had scaled the ramparts of the forts, and had made themselves masters of the garrisons. All was done quietly. The guns in the fortifications were spiked; and, leaving the few soldiers on guard gagged and bound, Jones and his followers hastened down to the wharves to set fire to the shipping.

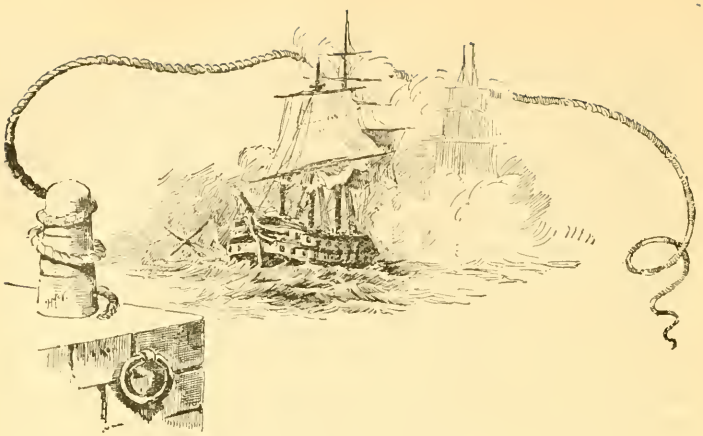
In the harbor were not less than two hundred and twenty vessels, large and small. On the north side of the harbor, near the forts, were about one hundred and fifty vessels. These Jones undertook to destroy. The others were left to Lieut. Wallingford, with his boat's crew of fifteen picked men.

When Jones and his followers reached the cluster of merchantmen, they found their torches so far burned out as to be useless. Failure stared them in the face then, when success was almost within their grasp. Jones, however, was not to be balked of his prey. Running his boat ashore, he hastened to a neighboring house, where he demanded candles. With these he returned, led his men aboard a large ship from which the crew fled, and deliberately built a fire in her hold. Lest the fire should go out, he found a barrel of tar, and threw it upon the flames. Then with the great ship roaring and crackling, and surrounded by scores of other vessels in danger from the flames, Jones withdrew, thinking his work complete.

Many writers have criticised Paul Jones for not having stayed longer to complete the destruction of the vessels in the harbor. But, with the gradually brightening day, his position, which was at the best very dangerous, was becoming desperate. There were one

hundred and fifty vessels in that part of the harbor; the crews averaged ten men to a vessel: so that nearly fifteen hundred men were opposed to the plucky little band of Americans. The roar of the fire aroused the people of the town, and they rushed in crowds to the wharf. In describing the affair Jones writes, "The inhabitants began to appear in thousands, and individuals ran hastily toward us. I stood between them and the ship on fire, with my pistol in my hand, and ordered them to stand, which they did with some precipitation. The sun was a full hour's march above the horizon; and, as sleep no longer ruled the world, it was time to retire. We re-embarked without opposition, having released a number of prisoners, as our boats could not carry them. After all my people had embarked, I stood upon the pier for a considerable space, yet no person advanced. I saw all the eminences round the town covered with the amazed inhabitants."

As his boat drew away from the blazing shipping, Jones looked anxiously across the harbor to the spot to which Lieut. Wallingford had been despatched. But no flames were seen in that quarter; for, Wallingford's torches having gone out, he had abandoned the enterprise. And so the Americans, having regained their ship, took their departure, leaving only one of the enemy's vessels burning. A most lame and impotent conclusion it was indeed; but, as Jones said, "What was done is sufficient to show that not all the boasted British navy is sufficient to protect their own coasts, and that the scenes of distress which they have occasioned in America may soon be brought home to their own doors."



## CHAPTER VII.

CAREER OF PAUL JONES CONTINUED.—HIS DESCENT UPON THE CASTLE OF LORD SELKIRK —THE AFFAIR OF THE PLATE.—THE DESCENT UPON WHITEHAVEN.—THE BATTLE WITH THE "DRAKE."—LIEUT. SIMPSON'S PERFIDY.

WE now come to the glorious part of the career of Paul Jones upon the ocean. Heretofore he has been chiefly occupied in the capture of defenceless merchantmen. His work has been that of the privateer, even if not of the pirate that the British have always claimed he was. But the time came when Jones proved that he was ready to fight an adversary of his mettle; was willing to take heavy blows, and deal stunning ones in return. His daring was not confined to dashing expeditions in which the danger was chiefly overcome by spirit and rapid movements. While this class of operations was ever a favorite with the doughty seaman, he was not at all averse to the deadly naval duel.

We shall for a time abandon our account of the general naval incidents of the Revolution, to follow the career of Paul Jones to the end of the war. His career is not only the most interesting, but the most important, feature of the naval operations of that war. He stands out alone, a grand figure in naval history, as does Decatur in the wars with the Barbary pirates, or Farragut in the war for the Union. The war of 1812

affords no such example of single greatness in the navy. There we find Perry, McDonough, and Porter, all equally great. But in '76 there was no one to stand beside Paul Jones.

When the "Ranger" left the harbor of Whitehaven, her captain was heavy hearted. He felt that he had had the opportunity to strike a heavy blow at the British shipping, but had nevertheless inflicted only a trifling hurt. Angry with himself for not having better planned the adventure, and discontented with his lieutenant for not having by presence of mind prevented the fiasco, he felt that peace of mind could only be obtained by some deed of successful daring.

He was cruising in seas familiar to him as a sailor. Along the Scottish shores his boyhood hours had been spent. This knowledge he sought to turn to account. From the deck of his ship, he could see the wooded shores of St. Mary's Island, on which were the landed estates of Lord Selkirk, a British noble of ancient lineage and political prominence. On the estate of this nobleman Paul Jones was born, and there he passed the few years of his life that elapsed before he forsook the land for his favorite element.

Leaning against the rail on the quarter-deck of the "Ranger," Jones could see through his spy-glass the turrets and spires of Lord Selkirk's castle. As he gazed, there occurred to him the idea, that if he could send a landing party ashore, seize the castle, capture the peer, and bear him off into captivity, he would not only strike terror into the hearts of the British, but would give the Americans a prisoner who would serve as a hostage to secure good treatment for the hapless Americans who had fallen into the hands of the enemy.

With Jones, the conception of a plan was followed by its swift execution. Disdaining to wait for nightfall, he chose two boats' crews of tried and trusty men, and landed. The party started up the broad and open highway leading to the castle. They had gone but a few rods, however, when they encountered two countrymen, who stared a moment at the force of armed men, and then turned in fear to escape.

"Halt!" rang out the clear voice of the leader of the blue-jackets; and the peasants fell upon their faces in abject terror. Jones directed that they be brought to him; and he questioned them kindly, setting their minds at rest, and learning from them much of the castle and its inmates.

Lord Selkirk was away from home. This to Jones was bitter news. It seemed as though some evil genius was dogging his footsteps, bringing failure upon his most carefully planned enterprises. But he was not a man to repine over the inevitable, and he promptly ordered his men to the right about, and made for the landing-place again.

But the sailors were not so unselfish in their motives as their captain. They had come ashore expecting to plunder the castle of the earl, and they now murmured loudly over the abandonment of the adventure. They saw the way clear before them. No guards protected the house. The massive ancestral plate, with which all English landed families are well provided, was unprotected by bolts or bars. They felt that, in retreating, they were throwing away a chance to despoil their enemy, and enrich themselves.

Jones felt the justice of the complaint of the sailors; but only after a fierce struggle with his personal scruples could he yield the point. The grounds of the Earl of Selkirk had been his early playground. A lodge on the vast estate had been his childhood's home. Lady Selkirk had shown his family many kindnesses. To now come to her house as a robber and pillager, seemed the blackest ingratitude; but, on the other hand, he had no right to permit his personal feelings to interfere with his duty to the crew. The sailors had followed him into danger many a time, and this was their first opportunity for financial reward. And, even if it was fair to deny them this chance to make a little prize-money, it would hardly be safe to sow the seeds of discontent among the crew while on a cruise in waters infested with the enemy's ships. With a sigh Jones abandoned his intention of protecting the property of Lady Selkirk, and ordered his lieutenant to proceed to the castle, and capture the family plate. Jones himself returned to the ship, resolved to purchase the spoils at open sale, and return them to their former owner.

The blue-jackets continued their way up the highway, and, turning aside where a heavy gate opened into a stately grove, demanded of an old man who came, wondering, out of the lodge, that he give them instant admittance. Then, swinging into a trot, they ran along the winding carriage-drive until they came out on the broad lawn that extended in front of the castle. Here for the first time they were seen by the inmates of the castle; and faint screams of fear, and shouts of astonishment,

came from the open windows of the stately pile. The men-servants came rushing out to discover who the lawless crowd that so violated the sanctity of an English earl's private park could be; but their curiosity soon abated when a few stout blue-jackets, cutlass and pistol in hand, surrounded them, and bade them keep quiet. The lieutenant, with two stout seamen at his back, then entered the castle, and sought out the mistress, who received him with calm courtesy, with a trace of scorn, but with no sign of fear.

Briefly the lieutenant told his errand. The countess gave an order to a butler, and soon a line of stout footmen entered, bearing the plate. Heavy salvers engraved with the family arms of Lord Selkirk, quaint drinking-cups and flagons curiously carved, ewers, goblets, platters, covers, dishes, teapots, and all kinds of table utensils were there, all of exquisitely artistic workmanship, and bearing the stamp of antiquity. When all was ready, the lieutenant called in two of the sailors from the lawn; and soon the whole party, bearing the captured treasure, disappeared in the curves of the road.

This incident, simple enough in reality, the novelist Fenimore Cooper has made the germ of one of his exquisite sea-tales, "The Pilot." British historians have made of it an example by which to prove the lawlessness and base ingratitude of Paul Jones. As may readily be imagined, it stirred up at the time the most intense excitement in England. Jones became the bugbear of timid people. His name was used to frighten little children. He was called pirate, traitor, free-booter, plunderer. It was indeed a most audacious act that he had committed. Never before or since had the soil of England been trodden by a hostile foot. Never had a British peer been forced to feel that his own castle was not safe from the invader. Jones, with his handful of American tars, had accomplished a feat which had never before been accomplished, and which no later foeman of England has dared to repeat. It is little wonder that the British papers described him as a bloodthirsty desperado.

A few weeks later, the captured plate was put up for sale by the prize agents. Capt. Jones, though not a rich man, bought it, and returned it to the countess. Lord Selkirk, in acknowledging its receipt, wrote, —

"And on all occasions, both now and formerly, I have done you the justice to tell that you made an offer of returning the plate very soon

after your return to Brest ; and although you yourself were not at my house, but remained at the shore with your boat, that you had your officers and men in such extraordinary good discipline, that your having given them the strictest orders to behave well, — to do no injury of any kind, to make no search, but only to bring off what plate was given them, — that in reality they did exactly as was ordered; and that not one man offered to stir from his post on the outside of the house, nor entered the doors, nor said an uncivil word ; that the two officers stayed not one-quarter of an hour in the parlor and in the butler's pantry while the butler got the plate together, behaved politely, and asked for nothing but the plate, and instantly marched their men off in regular order; and that both officers and men behaved in all respects so well, that it would have done credit to the best-disciplined troops whatever."

But the British took little notice of the generous reparation made by Capt. Jones, and continued to hurl abuse and hard names at him.

Jones was vastly disappointed at his failure to capture the person of Lord Selkirk. The story of the sufferings of his countrymen in British prisons worked upon his heart, and he longed to take captive a personage whom he could hold as hostage. But, soon after leaving St. Mary's Isle, he fell in again with the British man-of-war "Drake;" and as a result of this encounter he had prisoners enough to exchange for many hapless Americans languishing in hulks and prisons.

After the wind and tide had defeated the midnight attempt made by Jones to capture the "Drake," that craft had remained quietly at her anchorage, little suspecting that the bay of Carrickfergus had held so dangerous a neighbor. But soon reports of the "Ranger's" depredations began to reach the ears of the British captain. The news of the desperate raid upon Whitehaven became known to him. He therefore determined to leave his snug anchorage, and go in search of the audacious Yankee. Just as the captain of the "Drake" had reached this determination, and while he was making sail, the "Ranger" appeared off the mouth of the harbor.

The "Drake" promptly sent out a boat to examine the strange craft, and report upon her character. Jones saw her coming, and resolved to throw her off the scent. Accordingly, by skilful seamanship, he kept the stern of the "Ranger" continually presented to the prying eyes in the

British boat. Turn which way they might, be as swift in their manœuvres as they might, the British scouts could see nothing of the "Ranger" but her stern, pierced with two cabin windows, as might be the stern of any merchantman. Her sides, dotted with frowning ports, were kept securely hidden from their eyes.

Though provided with spy-glasses, the people in the boat were totally deceived. Unsuspectingly they came up under the stern of the "Ranger," and demanded to come on board. As the officer in command clambered up a rope, and vaulted the taffrail to the quarter-deck, he saw Paul Jones and his lieutenants, in full uniform, standing before him.

"Why, — why, what ship's this?" stammered the astonished officer.

"This is the American Continental ship 'Ranger,' and you are my prisoner," responded Jones; and at the words a few sailors, with cutlasses and pistols, called to the men in the boat alongside, to come aboard and give themselves up.

From his captives Jones learned that the news of the Whitehaven raid had reached the "Drake" only the night before; and that she had been re-enforcing her crew with volunteers, preparatory to going out in search of the "Ranger." As he stood talking to the captured British naval officer, Jones noticed slender columns of smoke rising from the woods on neighboring highlands, where he knew there were no houses.

"What does that mean?" he asked.

"Alarm fires, sir," answered the captive; "the news of your descent upon Whitehaven is terrifying the whole country."

Soon, however, the attention of the Americans was diverted from the signal-fires to the "Drake." An appearance of life and bustle was observable about the boat. The shrill notes of the boatswain's whistle, and the tramp of men about the capstan, came faintly over the waters. The rigging was full of sailors, and the sails were being quickly spread to catch the fresh breeze. Soon the ship began to move slowly from her anchorage; she heeled a little to one side, and, responsive to her helm, turned down the bay. She was coming out to look after her lost boat.

Jones determined to hold his ground, and give battle to the Englishman. He at once began to prepare for battle in every way possible without alarming the enemy. The great guns were loaded and primed. Cutlasses and pistols were brought up from the armorer's room, and placed in

convenient locations on the main deck, so that the boarders might find them when needed. The powder-monkeys, stripped for action, and the handlers and cartridge-makers entered the powder-magazine, and prepared to hand out the deadly explosive. The cook and his assistant strewed sawdust and ashes about the decks, to catch the blood, and keep the men from slipping. Every one was busy, from the captain down to the galley-boy.

There was plenty of time to prep re; for the tide was out, and the "Drake," beating down a narrow channel, made but slow headway. The delay was a severe strain upon the nerves of the men, who stood silent and grim at their quarters on the American ship, waiting for the fight to begin. At such a moment, even the most courageous must lose heart, as he thinks upon the terrible ordeal through which he must pass. Visions of home and loved ones flit before his misty eyes; and Jack chokes down a sob as he hides his emotion in nervously fingering the lock of his gun, or taking a squint through the port-holes at the approaching enemy.

At length the "Drake" emerged from the narrow channel of the harbor, and coming within hailing distance of the "Ranger," ran up the flag of England, and hailed, —

"What ship is that?"

Paul Jones, himself standing on the taffrail, made answer, —

"This is the American Continental ship 'Ranger.' We are waiting for you. The sun is but little more than an hour from setting. It is therefore time to begin."

The "Drake" lay with her bow towards the "Ranger," and a little astern. As Jones finished speaking, he turned to the man at the wheel, and said, "Put your helm up. Up, I say!"

Quickly responsive to her helm, the vessel swung round; and, as her broadside came to bear, she let fly a full broadside of solid shot into the crowded decks and hull of the "Drake." Through timbers and planks, flesh and bone, the iron hail rushed, leaving death, wounds, and destruction in its path. The volunteers that the "Drake" had added to her crew so crowded the decks, that the execution was fearful. It seemed as though every shot found a human mark.

But the British were not slow to return the fire, and the roar of

their broadside was heard before the thunder of the American fire had ceased to reverberate among the hills along the shore.

Then followed a desperate naval duel. The tide of victory flowed now this way, and now that. Jones kept his ship at close quarters with the enemy, and stood on the quarter-deck urging on his gunners, now pointing out some vulnerable spot, now applauding a good shot, at one time cheering, and at another swearing, watching every movement of his foe, and giving quick but wise orders to his helmsman, his whole mind concentrated upon the course of battle, and with never a thought for his own safety.

For more than an hour the battle raged, but the superior gunnery of the Americans soon began to tell. The "Drake" fought under no colors, her ensign having been shot away early in the action. But the spirited manner in which her guns were worked gave assurance that she had not struck. The American fire had wrought great execution on the deck of the Englishman. Her captain was desperately wounded early in the fight; and the first lieutenant, who took his place, was struck down by a musket-ball from the "Ranger's" tops. The cock-pit of the "Drake" was like a butcher's shambles, so bespattered was it with blood. But on the "Ranger" there was little execution. The brave Wallingford, Jones's first lieutenant and right-hand man, was killed early in the action, and one poor fellow accompanied him to his long account; but beyond this there were no deaths. Six men only were wounded.

The sun was just dipping the lower edge of its great red circle beneath the watery horizon, when the "Drake" began to show signs of failing. First her fire slackened. A few guns would go off at a time, followed by a long silence. That portion of her masts which was visible above the clouds of gunpowder-smoke showed plainly the results of American gunnery. The sails were shot to ribbons. The cordage cut by the flying shot hung loosely down, or was blown out by the breeze. The spars were shattered, and hung out of place. The mainmast canted to leeward, and was in imminent danger of falling. The jib had been shot away entirely, and was trailing in the water alongside the ship.

Gradually the fire of the "Drake" slackened, until at last it had ceased altogether. Noticing this, Capt. Jones gave orders to cease firing; and soon silence reigned over the bay that had for an hour resounded

with the thunder of cannon. As the smoke that enveloped the two ships cleared away, the people on the "Ranger" could see an officer standing on the rail of the "Drake" waving a white flag. At the sight a mighty huzza went up from the gallant lads on the Yankee ship, which was, however, quickly checked by Jones.

"Have you struck your flag?" he shouted through a speaking-trumpet.

"We have, sir," was the response.

"Then lay by until I send a boat aboard," directed Capt. Jones; and soon after a cutter put off from the side of the "Ranger," and made for the captured ship.

The boarding-officer clambered over the bulwarks of the "Drake," and, veteran naval officer as he was, started in amazement at the scene of bloodshed before him. He had left a ship on which were two dead and six wounded men. He had come to a ship on which were forty men either dead or seriously wounded. Two dismounted cannon lay across the deck, one resting on the shattered and bleeding fragments of a man torn to pieces by a heavy shot. The deck was slippery with blood. The cock-pit was not large enough to hold all the wounded; and many sufferers lay on the deck crying piteously for aid, and surrounded by the mangled bodies of their dead comrades. The body of the captain, who had died of his wound, lay on the deserted quarter-deck.

Hastily the American officer noted the condition of the prize, and returned to his own ship for aid. All the boats of the "Ranger" were then lowered, and in the growing darkness the work of taking possession of the prize began. Most of the prisoners were transferred to the "Ranger." The dead were thrown overboard without burial service or ceremony of any kind, such is the grim earnestness of war. Such of the wounded as could not be taken care of in the sick-bay of the "Drake" were transferred to the "Ranger." The decks were scrubbed, holystoned, and sprinkled with hot vinegar to take away the smell of the blood-soaked planks. Cordage was spliced, sails mended, shot-holes plugged up; and, by the time morning came, the two ships were sufficiently repaired to be ready to leave the bay.

But, before leaving, Capt. Jones set at liberty two fishermen, whom he had captured several days before, and held prisoners lest they should spread the news of his presence in those parts. While the fishermen

had been taken on board the "Ranger," and treated with the utmost kindness, their boat had been made fast alongside. Unluckily, however, the stormy weather had torn the boat from its fastenings; and it foundered before the eyes of its luckless owners, who bitterly bewailed their hard fate as they saw their craft disappear. But, when they came to leave the "Ranger," their sorrow was turned to joy; for Jones gave them money enough to buy for them a new boat and outfit,—a bit of liberality very characteristic of the man.

When the "Drake" was in condition to sail, Jones put her in command of Lieut. Simpson, and the two vessels left the bay. This choice of commander proved to be an unfortunate one. Simpson was in many ways a most eccentric officer. He was a violent advocate of equal rights of all men, and even went so far as to disbelieve in the discipline without which no efficiency can be obtained on ship-board. He was an eighteenth-century Sir Joseph Porter. He believed that all questions of importance on ship-board should be settled by a vote of the crew; that the captain was, in a certain sense, only perpetual chairman of a meeting, and should only execute the will of the sailors. Naturally, this view of an officer's authority was little relished by Lieut. Simpson's brother officers, and he had for some time been greatly dissatisfied with his position.

When it came about, therefore, that the "Ranger," seeing a strange sail in the offing, left the "Drake" to go in pursuit of the stranger, Lieut. Simpson saw his chance to make off with the "Drake," and thus rid himself of the disagreeable necessity of submitting to the orders of a superior officer. This course he determined to adopt; and when Jones, having overtaken the stranger and found her a neutral, turned to rejoin his prize, he was vastly astounded at the evolutions of the "Drake." The vessel which he had left in charge of one of his trusted officers seemed to be trying to elude him. She was already hull down on the horizon, and was carrying every stitch of sail. The "Ranger" signalled to her colleague to return, but in vain. Several large ships were in sight; but Jones, perplexed by the strange antics of his consort, abandoned all thoughts of making captures, and made after the rapidly vanishing "Drake."

As the "Ranger" cut through the ugly cross seas of the channel, Jones revolved in his mind the causes which might lead to the inexplicable

flight of his consort. His chief fear was that the prisoners on the "Drake" might have risen, overpowered their captors, and were then endeavoring to take the ship into a British port. Convinced that this was the true explanation of the matter, Jones made tremendous efforts to overhaul the prize before the night should give her an opportunity to elude pursuit. Every thing from jib-boom to main-truck, that would draw, was set on the "Ranger;" and the gallant little vessel ploughed along at a rate that almost belied her reputation as a slow craft. After an hour's run, it became evident that the "Ranger" was gaining ground. Nevertheless, darkness settled over the waters, and the "Drake" was still far in the lead. It was not until the next day that the runaway was overhauled. Upon boarding the "Drake," Jones found, to his intense indignation, that not to the revolt of the captives, but to the wilful and silly insubordination of Lieut. Simpson, the flight of the captured vessel was due. This officer, feeling himself aggrieved by something Jones had said or done, had determined to seize upon the "Drake," repair her in some French port, and thenceforward to cruise as a privateer. This plan was nipped in the bud by Jones, who put the disobedient officer in irons, and carried the "Drake" into Brest as a prize.

All Europe now rang with the praises of Paul Jones. Looked at in the calm light of history, his achievements do not appear so very remarkable. But it is none the less true that they have never been paralleled. Before the day of Paul Jones, no hostile vessel had ever swept the English Channel and Irish Sea clear of British merchantmen. And since the day of Paul Jones the exploit has never been repeated, save by the little American brig "Argus" in the War of 1812. But neither before nor since the day of Paul Jones has the spectacle of a British ship in an English port, blazing with fire applied by the torches of an enemy, been seen. And no other man than Paul Jones has, for several centuries, led an invading force down the level highways, and across the green fields, of England.

## CHAPTER VIII.

THE CAREER OF PAUL JONES CONTINUED.—HIS SEARCH FOR A SHIP.—GIVEN COMMAND OF THE "BON HOMME RICHARD."—LANDAIS AND HIS CHARACTER.—THE FRUSTRATED MUTINY.—LANDAIS QUARRELS WITH JONES.—EDINBURGH AND LEITH THREATENED.—THE DOMINIE'S PRAYER.

WHEN Paul Jones arrived at Brest, bringing the captured Drake, he found the situation of affairs materially altered. France had acknowledged the independence of the American Colonies, and had openly espoused their cause as against that of Great Britain. It was no longer necessary to resort to cunning deceptions to buy a warship or sell a prize in a French port. French vessels, manned by French crews and commanded by French officers, were putting to sea to strike a blow against the British. French troops were being sent to America. The stars and stripes waved by the side of the *fleur de lys;* and Benjamin Franklin, the American envoy, was the lion of French society, and the idol of the Parisian mob.

Paul Jones saw in this friendship of France for the struggling colonies his opportunity. Heretofore he had been condemned to command only slow-going, weak ships. He had been hampered by a lack of funds for the payment of his crew and the purchase of provisions. More than once the inability of the impoverished Continental Congress to provide the sinews of war had forced him to go down into his own purse for the necessary funds. All this period of penury he now felt was past. He could rely upon the king of France for a proper vessel, and the funds with which to prosecute his work on the seas. Accordingly, when the "Ranger" was again ready for sea, he turned her over to the

insubordinate Lieut. Simpson, while he himself remained in France with the expectation of being provided with a better ship.

But the sturdy seaman soon found how vexatious is the lot of him who depends upon the bounty of monarchs. Ship after ship was put in commission, but no command was tendered to the distinguished American. The French naval officers had first to be attended to. Jones made earnest appeals to the minister of the marine. He brought every possible influence to bear. His claims were urged by Dr. Franklin, but all to no avail. At last an appointment came. It was to command an English prize, lately captured and brought into Brest. Thither went Jones to examine the craft. Much to his disappointment, he found her very slow; and this determined him to decline the commission.

"I wish to have no connection with any ship that does not sail fast," he wrote to a gentleman who had secured for him the appointment; "for I intend to go in harm's way. You know I believe that this is not every one's intention. Therefore, buy a frigate that sails fast, and that is sufficiently large to carry twenty-six or twenty-eight guns, not less than twelve-pounders, on one deck. I would rather be shot ashore than sent to sea in such things as the armed prizes I have described."

Five months of waiting and ceaseless solicitation of the authorities still left the sailor, who had won so many victories, stranded in shameful inactivity. He had shrunk from a personal interview with the king, trusting rather to the efforts of his friends, many of whom were in high favor at Versailles. But one day he happened to light upon an old copy of "Poor Richard's Almanac," that unique publication in which Benjamin Franklin printed so many wise maxims and witty sayings. As Jones listlessly turned its pages, his eye fell upon the maxim, —

"If you wish to have any 'usiness done faithfully and expeditiously, go and do it yourself. Otherwise, send some one."

Shutting the book, and dashing it to the floor, Jones sprang to his feet exclaiming, "I will go to Versailles this very day." Before night he set out, and soon reached the royal court. His reputation easily gained him an interview; and his frank, self-reliant way so impressed the monarch, that in five days the American was tendered the command of the ship "Daras," mounting forty guns.

Great was the exultation of the American seaman at this happy termi-

nation of his labor. Full of gratitude to the distinguished philosopher whose advice had proved so effective, he wrote to the minister of marine, begging permission to change the name of the vessel to the "Poor Richard," or, translated into French, the "Bon Homme Richard." Permission was readily granted; and thereafter the "Bon Homme Richard," with Paul Jones on the quarter-deck, did valiant work for the cause of the young American Republic.

The "Bon Homme Richard" was lying in the harbor of l'Orient when Jones visited her to examine his new ship He found her a fairly well modelled craft, giving promise of being a good sailer. She had one of the high pitched poops that were so common in the early part of the last century, and that gave to the sterns of ships of that period the appearance of lofty towers. Originally she was a single-decked ship, mounting her battery on one gun-deck, with the exception of a few cannon on the quarter-deck and forecastle. The gun-deck mounted twenty-eight guns, all twelve-pounders. On the quarter-deck and forecastle were eight long nines. To this armament Jones at once added six eighteen-pounders, which were mounted in the gun-room below.

To man this vessel, Jones was obliged to recruit a most motley crew. Few American seamen were then in France, and he considered himself fortunate to find enough to fill the stations of officers on the quarter-deck and forward. For his crew proper he was forced to accept an undisciplined crowd of Portuguese, Norwegians, Germans, Spaniards, Swedes, Italians, Malays, Scotch, Irish, and even a few Englishmen. About a hundred and thirty-five marines were put aboard to keep order among this rabble; and, even with this aid to discipline, it is wonderful that no disturbance ever broke out in a crew that was made up of so many discordant elements.

While the "Bon Homme Richard" was being made ready for sea, the vessels that were to sail with her as consorts were making for the rendezvous at l'Orient. These vessels were the "Pallas," "Cerf," "Vengeance," and "Alliance." The three former were small vessels, built in France, and manned wholly by Frenchmen. The "Alliance" was a powerful, well-built American frigate, carrying an American crew, but commanded by a French officer, — Capt. Landais. This vessel was the last to arrive at the rendezvous, as she had a stormy and somewhat eventful trip across the ocean.

The "Alliance" was a thirty-two gun frigate, built under the supervision of the American Marine Committee, and which had come to European waters, bringing as a passenger the distinguished Gen. Lafayette. As has been stated, she was under the command of a French naval officer, to whom the command had been offered as a compliment to France. Unfortunately the jack tars of America were not so anxious to compliment France, and looked with much disfavor upon the prospect of serving under a Frenchman. Capt. Landais, therefore, found great difficulty in getting a crew to man his frigate; and when Lafayette reached Boston, ready to embark for France, the roster of the ship in which he was to sail was still painfully incomplete. Great was the mortification of the American authorities; and the government of Massachusetts, desiring to aid the distinguished Frenchman in every way, offered to complete by impressment. It is vastly to the credit of Lafayette that he refused for a moment to countenance a method of recruiting so entirely in opposition to those principles of liberty to which he was devoted. But, though impressment was not resorted to, a plan hardly less objectionable was adopted. The British man-of-war "Somerset" had been wrecked on the New England coast some time before, and many of her crew were then in Boston. These men volunteered to join the crew of the "Alliance," though by so doing they knew that they were likely to be forced to fight against their own flag and countrymen. But the ties of nationality bear lightly upon sailors, and these men were as ready to fight under the stars and stripes as under the cross of St. George.

With a crew made up of Americans, Englishmen, and Frenchmen, the "Alliance" put to sea in the early part of January, 1779. It was the most stormy season of the year on the tempestuous Atlantic. But the storms which racked the good ship from without were as nothing to the turbulence within. In the forecastle were three different elements of discord. British, French, and Americans quarrelled bitterly among themselves, and the jackies went about their work with a sullen air that betokened trouble brewing.

The officers suspected the impending trouble, but had little idea of its extent. They were living over a volcano which was liable to burst forth at any moment. The Englishmen in the crew, who numbered some seventy or eighty, had determined to mutiny, and had perfected all their plans for

the uprising. Their intention was not only to seize the ship, and take her into an English port, but they proposed to wreak their hatred in the bloodiest form upon the officers. Capt. Landais, as the special object of their hate, was to be put into an open boat without food, water, oars, or sails. Heavy irons were to bind his wrists and ankles, and he was to be set adrift to starve on the open ocean. The fate of the surgeon and marine officer was to be equally hard. They were to be hanged and quartered, and their bodies cast into the sea. The sailing-master was to be seized up to the mizzen-mast, stripped to the waist, and his back cut to pieces with the cat-of-nine-tails; after which he was to be slowly hacked to pieces with cutlasses, and thrown into the sea. The gunner, carpenter, and boatswain were to be mercifully treated. No torture was prepared for them, but they were to be promptly put to death. As to the lieutenants, they were to be given the choice between navigating the ship to the nearest British port, or walking the plank.

This sanguinary programme the mutineers discussed day and night. The ringleaders were in the same watch, and in the silent hours of the night matured their plans, and picked out men whom they thought would join them. One by one they cautiously chose their associates. The sailor whom the mutineers thought was a safe man would be led quietly apart from his fellows to some secluded nook on the gun-deck; and there, with many pledges to secrecy, the plot would be revealed, and his assistance asked. Or perhaps of two men out on the end of a tossing yard-arm, far above the raging waters, one would be a mutineer, and would take that opportunity to try to win his fellow sailor to the cause. So the mutiny spread apace; and the volcano was almost ready to burst forth, when all was discovered, and the plans of the mutineers were happily defeated.

The conspirators had succeeded in gaining the support of all the Englishmen in the crew, as well as many of the sailors of other nationalities. So numerous were their adherents, that they were well able to capture the ship; but before so doing they sought to gain one more recruit. This man was an American sailor, who had lived long in Ireland, and spoke with a slight brogue, that led the conspirators to think him a subject of the king, and an enemy to the revolted colonies. This man was known to have some knowledge of navigation, and the mutineers felt that his assistance would be essential to the success of their plot. Though they

had planned to force the lieutenant, under penalty of death, to navigate the vessel into a British port, they had no means of telling whether the lieutenant should play them false. It would be an easy matter for an officer to take the ship into a French port, where the lives of the conspirators should pay the penalty of their misdeeds. Accordingly, it was highly important for them to number among them some one versed in the science of navigation; and, with this end in view, they turned to the young Irish-American.

The young seaman proved to be possessed of the loyalty and shrewdness of the Yankee, together with a touch of the blarney of the genuine Irishman. He listened to the complaints of the mutineers, sympathized with their grievances, entered heartily into their plans, and by his apparent interest in the conspiracy soon became looked upon as one of the chief ringleaders.

He learned that the plan of the conspirators was to assemble on deck about daylight on a certain day when one of the conspirators should be posted in the tops as lookout. This man was to raise the cry of "Sail, ho!" when the officers and passengers would of course come to the quarter-deck unarmed. The mutineers would commence operations by seizing them in a body. Then, separating into four parties, the conspirators would seize upon the ship. On the forecastle were mounted four nine-pound guns. These were usually kept charged with blank cartridge only; but a gunner's mate, who was one of the ringleaders, had quietly slipped a charge of canister into each gun. Should the officers show signs of resistance, these cannon were to be trained aft, and the quarter-deck swept by their discharge. Discipline on a man-of-war requires that the crew should be kept disarmed, except in time of battle; the cutlasses, pikes, and pistols being given over to the armorer. But a sergeant of marines had done the cause of the mutineers good service, by purloining some muskets, and handing them over to the ringleaders.

Having thus gained full knowledge of the plans of the mutineers, the loyal seaman sought the first opportunity to warn the officers of the ship. But not until three o'clock on the afternoon before the day set for the mutiny could he manage to slip into the captain's cabin unseen by the conspirators. Landais and Lafayette were seated there talking.

"Well, what's wanted now?" asked the captain in the peremptory tone officers assume in speaking to a sailor.

The intruder stammered and looked confused, but finally managed to tell the story. Landais was amazed. That so dangerous a conspiracy should have been nurtured in his crew, astonished him beyond expression. But he wasted no time in vain conjectures. Quietly the word was passed to the officers and passengers to assemble in the captain's cabin. Some trusty petty officers were given arms to distribute among the American and French seamen who had not been infected with the fever of mutiny. At a given signal the officers and passengers rushed to the quarter-deck. The American and French seamen joined them; and the conspirators suddenly found themselves confronted by an angry body of determined men, fully armed.

The leading mutineers were pointed out by the informer, instantly seized, and hurried below in irons. Then the work of arresting the other conspirators began, and was continued until about forty of the English were in irons. While the work was progressing, a square-rigged ship hove in sight, and was soon made out to be one of the enemy's twenty-gun ships. Under ordinary circumstances, the "Alliance" would have sought to give battle to the enemy; but in the present instance, with mutiny rife among his crew, Capt. Landais thought it his wisest course to avoid the stranger. A few days later, the "Alliance" arrived at Brest, where the mutineers were thrown into jail, and kept in close confinement, until exchanged for American prisoners in the hands of the British.

But to return to Paul Jones, whom we left with the "Bon Homme Richard" lying at anchor in the harbor of l'Orient waiting for the arrival of his allies. On the 19th of June, 1779, all were ready to sail, and left the harbor with a few coasters and transports under convoy. The "Bon Homme Richard" was the largest vessel of the little fleet; next came the "Alliance," under command of Capt. Landais; then the "Pallas," an old merchantman hastily remodelled, and mounting thirty-two guns; then the "Cerf" with eighteen guns, and the "Vengeance" with twelve. Though not a very formidable armada, this little fleet might have done great good to the American cause, had Paul Jones been given proper authority, and had his daring plans been countenanced by the French authorities. But, though nominally commander-in-chief, Jones soon found that he had no means of enforcing his authority. He found

that the three Frenchmen in command of the other vessels of the squadron looked upon him as a partner in the enterprise, rather than as a leader with absolute authority. They paid no heed to the signals set at the fore of the flagship. They wilfully disobeyed orders. Worse than all, they proved to be poor seamen; and the squadron had hardly got into blue water before the "Alliance" was run foul of the "Richard," losing her own mizzen-mast, and tearing away the head and bowsprit of the flagship. Thus, after long months of preparation for sea, Jones found himself forced to return to port to refit. It has been charged that this accident was not altogether accidental, so far as the "Alliance" was concerned. Landais, the commander of that vessel, hated Jones, and was insanely jealous of the man who outranked him. The collision was only the first of a series of mishaps, all of which Landais ascribed to accident, but which unprejudiced readers must confess seem to have been inspired by malice or the results of gross incompetence.

A few days sufficed to repair all damage, and again the vessels sought the open sea. When two days out, a strange sail was sighted. Jones crowded all sail on the "Richard," and set out in hot pursuit, but found, to his bitter disappointment, that his ship was a wretchedly slow sailer. Therefore, signalling to the swift-sailing "Cerf" to follow the stranger, he abandoned the chase to the smaller craft. All night long the cutter followed in the wake of the stranger, and when day broke the two vessels were near enough to each other to readily make out each other's character. The stranger proved to be a small English cruiser of fourteen guns. Her captain was no poltroon; for as soon as he discovered that the ship from which he had been trying to escape was but little larger than his own, he came about, and, running down upon the "Cerf," opened fire. The action was a sharp one. The two vessels were fairly matched and well fought. The thunder of their broadsides resounded far and wide over the ocean. For an hour they grappled in deadly strife. The tide of battle turned now to one side, and now to the other. But at last the superior metal of the "Cerf" won for her the victory. With her battered prize in tow, she sought to rejoin the squadron, but unluckily fell in with a British frigate that had been attracted by the sound of the cannonading. It was useless to think of saving the prize: so the "Cerf" abandoned it, and after a hard chase escaped, and put into the harbor of l'Orient.

In the mean time, the squadron had become separated; and, after a fortnight's fruitless cruising, all the vessels returned to l'Orient. Here they lay until the middle of August. More than three months had passed since Jones had been given command of the "Richard." Most of the time had been spent in port. The little cruising that had been done had been unproductive of results. Dissension and jealousy made the squadron absolutely ineffective. As for the "Bon Homme Richard," she had proved a failure; being unable to overhaul the enemy that she wished to engage, or escape from the man-of-war she might wish to avoid. Jones saw his reputation fast slipping away from him. Bitterly he bewailed the fate that had put him at the mercy of a lot of quarrelsome Frenchmen. He determined that when once again he got to sea he would ignore his consorts, and fight the battles of his country with his own ship only.

It was on the 14th of August that the squadron weighed anchor, and left the harbor of l'Orient. The "Richard" was greatly strengthened by the addition to her crew of about one hundred American seamen, who had been sent to France from England in exchange for a number of English prisoners. With her sailed the same vessels that had previously made up the squadron, together with two French privateers,—the "Monsieur" and the "Granville." Four days after sailing, a large French ship in charge of a British prize-crew was sighted. The whole squadron gave chase; and the "Monsieur," being the swiftest sailer of the fleet, recaptured the prize. Then arose a quarrel. The privateersmen claimed that the prize was theirs alone. They had captured it, and the regular naval officers had no authority over them. To this Capt. Jones vigorously demurred, and, taking the prize from its captors, sent it to l'Orient to be disposed of in accordance with the laws. In high dudgeon, the privateers vowed vengeance, and that night the "Monsieur" left the squadron. She was a fine, fast vessel, mounting forty guns; and her departure greatly weakened the fleet.

A few days later a second serious loss was encountered. The fleet was lying off Cape Clear, only a few miles from the shore. The day was perfectly calm. Not a breath of wind ruffled the calm surface of the water. The sails flapped idly against the mast. The sailors lay about the decks, trying to keep cool, and lazily watching the distant shore. Far off in the distance a white sail glimmered on the horizon.

It showed no sign of motion, and was clearly becalmed. After some deliberation, Capt. Jones determined to attempt to capture the stranger by means of boats. The two largest boats, manned with crews of picked men, were sent out to hail the vessel, and, if she proved to be an enemy, to capture her. In this they were successful, and returned next day, bringing the captured craft.

But, while the two boats were still out after the enemy's ship, the tide changed; and Capt. Jones soon saw that his ship was in danger from a powerful current, that seemed to be sweeping her on shore. A few hundred yards from the ship, two dangerous reefs, known as the Skallocks and the Blasketts, reared their black heads above the calm surface of the sea. Toward these rocks the "Bon Homme Richard" was drifting, when Jones, seeing the danger, ordered out two boats to tow the ship to a less perilous position. As the best men of the crew had been sent away to capture the brig, the crews of the two boats were made up of the riff-raff of the crew. Many of them were Englishmen, mere mercenary sailors, who had shipped on the Richard, secretly intending to desert at the first opportunity. Therefore, when night fell, as they were still in the boats trying to pull the "Richard's" head around, they cut the ropes and made off for the shore.

The desertion was discovered immediately. The night was clear, and by the faint light of the stars the course of the receding boats could be traced. The sailing-master of the "Richard," a Mr. Trent, being the first to discover the treachery, sprang into a boat with a few armed men, and set out in hot pursuit. The bow-gun of the "Richard" was hastily trained on the deserters, and a few cannon-shot sent after them; but without effect. Before the pursuing boat could overhaul the fugitives, a dense bank of gray fog settled over the water, and pursued and pursuers were hidden from each other and from the gaze of those on the man-of-war. All night long the fog, like a moist, impenetrable curtain, rested on the ocean. The next day the "Cerf" set out to find the missing boats. As she neared the shore, to avoid raising an alarm, she hoisted British colors. Hardly had she done so when she was seen by Trent and his companions. The fog made the outlines of the cutter indistinct, and magnified her in the eyes of the Americans, so that they mistook her for an English man-of-war. To avoid what they thought would lead to certain capture

on the water, they ran their boat ashore, and speedily fell into the hands of the British coast guard. They were at once thrown into prison, where the unfortunate Trent soon died. The rest of the party were exchanged later in the war.

The loss of the boats, and capture of Mr. Trent and his followers, were not the only unfortunate results of this incident; for the "Cerf" became lost in the fog, and before she could rejoin the fleet a violent gale sprang up, and she was carried back to the coast of France. She never again returned to join the fleet, and Jones found his force again depleted.

But the effective force of the squadron under the command of Paul Jones was weakened far more by the eccentric and mutinous actions of Capt. Landais of the "Alliance" than by any losses by desertion or capture. When the news of the loss of two boats by desertion reached the "Alliance," Landais straightway went to the "Richard," and entering the cabin began to upbraid Jones in unmeasured terms for having lost two boats through his folly in sending boats to capture a brig.

"It is not true, Capt. Landais," answered Jones, "that the boats which are lost are the two which were sent to capture the brig."

"Do you tell me I lie?" screamed the Frenchman, white with anger. His officers strove to pacify him, but without avail; and he left the "Richard" vowing that he would challenge Capt. Jones, and kill him. Shortly thereafter the "Richard" captured a very valuable prize, — a ship mounting twenty-two guns, and loaded with sails, rigging, anchors, cables, and other essential articles for the navy Great Britain was building on the Lakes. By desertion and other causes, the crew of the "Richard" was greatly depleted, and not enough men could be spared to man the prize. Jones applied to Landais for aid. In response the Frenchman said, —

"If it is your wish that I should take charge of the prize, I shall not allow any boat or any individual from the 'Bon Homme Richard' to go near her."

To this absurd stipulation Jones agreed. Landais, having thus assumed complete charge of the prize, showed his incompetence by sending her, together with a prize taken by the "Alliance," to Bergen in Norway. The Danish Government, being on friendly terms with England, immediately surrendered the vessels to the British ambassador; and the cause of the young republic was cheated of more than two hundred thousand dollars through the insane negligence of the French captain.

Ever thereafter, Landais manifested the most insolent indifference to the orders of Capt. Jones, to whom, as his superior officer, he should render implicit obedience. He came and went as he saw fit. The "Alliance" would disappear from the squadron, and return again after two or three days' absence, without apology or explanation. Jones soon learned to look with indifference upon the antics of his consort, and considered his squadron as composed of the "Richard," "Vengeance," and "Pallas" only.

On the 15th of September, the three vessels lay off the port of Leith, a thriving city, which was then, as now, the seaport for the greater city of Edinburgh, which stands a little farther inland. Jones had come to this point cherishing one of those daring plans of which his mind was so fertile. He had learned that the harbor was full of shipping, and defended only by a single armed vessel of twenty guns. Shore batteries there were none. The people of the town were resting in fancied security, and had no idea that the dreaded Paul Jones was at their very harbor's mouth. It would have been an easy matter for the three cruisers to make a dash into the harbor, take some distinguished prisoners, demand a huge ransom, fire the shipping, and escape again to the open sea. Had Jones been in reality, as he was in name, the commander of the little fleet, the exploit would have been performed. But the lack of authority which had hampered him throughout his cruise paralyzed him here. By the time he had overcome the timid objections of the captains of the "Vengeance" and the "Pallas," all Leith was aroused. Still Jones persevered. His arrangements were carefully perfected. Troops were to be landed under command of Lieut.-Col. Chamillard, who was to lay before the chief magistrate of the town the following letter, written by Jones himself: —

"I do not wish to distress the poor inhabitants. My intention is only to demand your contribution toward the reimbursement which Britain owes to the much injured citizens of America. Savages would blush at the unmanly violation and rapacity that have marked the tracks of British tyranny in America, from which neither virgin innocence nor helpless age has been a plea of protection or pity.

"Leith and its port now lay at our mercy. And did not the plea of humanity stay the just hand of retaliation, I should without advertisement lay it in ashes. Before I proceed to that stern duty as an officer, my

duty as a man induces me to propose to you, by means of a reasonable ransom, to prevent such a scene of horror and distress. For this reason, I have authorized Lieut.-Col. de Chamillard to agree with you on the terms of ransom, allowing you exactly half an hour's reflection before you finally accept or reject the terms which he shall propose."

The landing parties having been chosen, the order of attack mapped out, and part to be taken by each boat's-crew accurately defined, the three vessels advanced to the attack. It was a bright Sunday morning. A light breeze blowing on shore wafted the three vessels gently along the smooth surface of the bay. It is said that as the invaders passed the little town of Kirkaldy, the people were at church, but, seeing the three men-of-war passing, deserted the sacred edifice for the beach, where the gray-haired pastor, surrounded by his flock, offered the following remarkable appeal to the Deity: —

"Now, dear Lord, dinna ye think it a shame for ye to send this vile pirate to rob our folk o' Kirkaldy? Ye ken that they are puir enow already, and hae naething to spare. The way the wind blaws, he'll be here in a jiffy. And wha kens what he may do? He's nae to good for ony thing. Mickles the mischief he has done already. He'll burn their hooses, take their very claes, and strip them to the very sark. And waes me, wha kens but that the bluidy villain might tak' their lives! The puir weemin are most frightened out of their wits, and the bairns screeching after them. I canna think of it! I canna think of it!

"I hae long been a faithful servant to ye, O Lord. But gin ye dinna turn the wind about, and blaw the scoundrel out of our gate, I'll nae stir a foot, but will just sit here till the tide comes. Sae tak' your will o't."

Never was prayer more promptly answered. Hardly had the pastor concluded his prayer, when the wind veered round, and soon a violent gale was blowing off shore. In the teeth of the wind, the ships could make no headway. The gale increased in violence until it rivalled in fierceness a tornado. The sea was lashed into fury, and great waves arose, on the crests of which the men-of-war were tossed about like fragile shells. The coal-ship which had been captured was so racked and torn by the heavy seas, that her seams opened, and she foundered so speedily, that only by the most active efforts was her crew saved.

After several hours' ineffectual battling with the gale, the ships were forced to come about and run out to sea; and Jones suffered the mortification of witnessing the failure of his enterprise, after having been within gunshot of the town that he had hoped to capture. As for the good people of Kirkaldy, they were convinced that their escape from the daring seamen was wholly due to the personal influence of their pastor with the Deity; and the worthy parson lived long afterward, ever held in the most mighty veneration by the people of his flock.

## CHAPTER IX.

CAREER OF PAUL JONES CONCLUDED. — THE BATTLE BETWEEN THE "BON HOMME RICHARD" AND THE "SERAPIS." — TREACHERY OF LANDAIS. — JONES'S GREAT VICTORY. — LANDAIS STEALS THE "ALLIANCE." — JONES IN COMMAND OF THE "ARIEL." — THE "ARIEL" IN THE STORM. — ARRIVAL IN AMERICA.

AFTER this adventure, the three vessels continued their cruise along the eastern coast of Scotland. Continued good fortune, in the way of prizes, rather soothed the somewhat chafed feelings of Capt. Jones, and he soon recovered from the severe disappointment caused by the failure of his attack upon Leith. He found good reason to believe that the report of his exploits had spread far and wide in England, and that British sea-captains were using every precaution to avoid encountering him. British vessels manifested an extreme disinclination to come within hailing distance of any of the cruisers, although all three were so disguised that it seemed impossible to make out their warlike character. One fleet of merchantmen that caught sight of the "Bon Homme Richard" and the "Pallas" ran into the River Humber, to the mouth of which they were pursued by the two men-of-war. Lying at anchor outside the bar, Jones made signal for a pilot, keeping the British flag flying at his peak. Two pilot-boats came out; and Jones, assuming the character of a British naval officer, learned from them, that, besides the merchantmen lying at anchor in the river, a British frigate lay there waiting to convoy a fleet of merchantmen to the north. Jones tried to lure the frigate out with a signal that the pilots revealed to him; but, though she weighed anchor, she was driven back by strong head-winds that were blowing. Disappointed in this plan, Jones continued his

cruise. Soon after he fell in with the "Alliance" and the "Vengeance;" and, while off Flamborough Head, the little squadron encountered a fleet of forty-one merchant ships, that, at the sight of the dreaded Yankee cruisers, crowded together like a flock of frightened pigeons, and made all sail for the shore; while two stately men-of-war — the "Serapis, forty-four," and the "Countess of Scarborough, twenty-two" — moved forward to give battle to the Americans.

Jones now stood upon the threshold of his greatest victory. His bold and chivalric mind had longed for battle, and recoiled from the less glorious pursuit of burning helpless merchantmen, and terrorizing small towns and villages. He now saw before him a chance to meet the enemy in a fair fight, muzzle to muzzle, and with no overpowering odds on either side. Although the Americans had six vessels to the Englishmen's two, the odds were in no wise in their favor. Two of the vessels were pilot-boats, which, of course, kept out of the battle. The "Vengeance," though ordered to render the larger vessels any possible assistance, kept out of the fight altogether, and even neglected to make any attempt to overhaul the flying band of merchantmen. As for the "Alliance," under the erratic Landais, she only entered the conflict at the last moment; and then her broadsides, instead of being delivered into the enemy, crashed through the already shattered sides of the "Bon Homme Richard." Thus the actual combatants were the "Richard" with forty guns, against the "Serapis" with forty-four; and the "Pallas" with twenty-two guns, against the "Countess of Scarborough" with twenty-two.

It was about seven o'clock in the evening of a clear September day — the twenty-third — that the hostile vessels bore down upon each other, making rapid preparations for the impending battle. The sea was fast turning gray, as the deepening twilight robbed the sky of its azure hue. A brisk breeze was blowing, that filled out the bellying sails of the ships, and beat the waters into little waves capped with snowy foam. In the west the rosy tints of the autumnal sunset were still warm in the sky. Nature was in one of her most smiling moods, as these men with set faces, and hearts throbbing with the mingled emotions of fear and excitement, stood silent at their guns, or worked busily at the ropes of the great war-ships.

As soon as he became convinced of the character of the two English

ships, Jones beat his crew to quarters, and signalled his consorts to form in line of battle. The people on the "Richard" went cheerfully to their guns; and though the ship was extremely short-handed, and crowded with prisoners, no voice was raised against giving immediate battle to the enemy. The actions of the other vessels of the American fleet, however, gave little promise of any aid from that quarter. When the enemy was first sighted, the swift-sailing "Alliance" dashed forward to reconnoitre. As she passed the "Pallas," Landais cried out, that, if the stranger proved to be a forty-four, the only course for the Americans was immediate flight. Evidently the result of his investigations convinced him that in flight lay his only hope of safety; for he quickly hauled off, and stood away from the enemy. The "Vengeance," too, ran off to windward, leaving the "Richard" and the "Pallas" to bear the brunt of battle.

It was by this time quite dark, and the position of the ships was outlined by the rows of open portholes gleaming with the lurid light of the battle-lanterns. On each ship rested a stillness like that of death itself. The men stood at their guns silent and thoughtful. Sweet memories of home and loved ones mingled with fearful anticipations of death or of mangling wounds in the minds of each. The little lads whose duty in time of action it was to carry cartridges from the magazine to the gunners had ceased their boyish chatter, and stood nervously at their stations. Officers walked up and down the decks, speaking words of encouragement to the men, glancing sharply at primers and breechings to see that all was ready, and ever and anon stooping to peer through the porthole at the line of slowly moving lights that told of the approach of the enemy. On the quarter-deck, Paul Jones, with his officers about him, stood carefully watching the movements of the enemy through a night glass, giving occasionally a quiet order to the man at the wheel, and now and then sending an agile midshipman below with orders to the armorer, or aloft with orders for the sharp-shooters posted in the tops.

As the night came on, the wind died away to a gentle breeze, that hardly ruffled the surface of the water, and urged the ships toward each other but sluggishly. As they came within pistol-shot of each other, bow to bow, and going on opposite tacks, a hoarse cry came from the deck of the "Serapis," —

"What ship is that?"

"What is that you say?"

"What ship is that? Answer immediately, or I shall fire into you."

Instantly with a flash and roar both vessels opened fire. The thunder of the broadsides reverberated over the waters; and the bright flash of the cannon, together with the pale light of the moon just rising, showed Flamborough Head crowded with multitudes who had come out to witness the grand yet awful spectacle of a naval duel.

The very first broadside seemed enough to wreck the fortunes of the "Richard." In her gun-room were mounted six long eighteens, the only guns she carried that were of sufficient weight to be matched against the heavy ordnance of the "Serapis." At the very first discharge, two of these guns burst with frightful violence. Huge masses of iron were hurled in every direction, cutting through beams and stanchions, crashing through floors and bulkheads, and tearing through the agonized bodies of the men who served the guns. Hardly a man who was stationed in the gun-room escaped unhurt in the storm of iron and splinters. Several huge blocks of iron crashed through the upper deck, injuring the people on the deck above, and causing the cry to be raised, that the magazine had blown up. This unhappy calamity not only rendered useless the whole battery of eighteen-pounders, thus forcing Jones to fight an eighteen-pounder frigate with a twelve-pounder battery, but it spread a panic among the men, who saw the dangers of explosion added to the peril they were in by reason of the enemy's continued fire.

Jones himself left the quarter-deck, and rushed forward among the men, cheering them on, and arousing them to renewed activity by his exertions. Now he would lend a hand at training some gun, now pull at a rope, or help a lagging powder-monkey on his way. His pluck and enthusiasm infused new life into the men; and they threw the heavy guns about like playthings, and cheered loudly as each shot told.

The two ships were at no time separated by a greater distance than half a pistol-shot, and were continually manœuvring to cross each others' bows, and get in a raking broadside. In this attempt, they crossed from one to the other side of each other; so that now the port and now the starboard battery would be engaged. From the shore these evolutions were concealed under a dense cloud of smoke, and the spectators could only see the tops of the two vessels moving slowly

about before the light breeze; while the lurid flashes of the cannon, and constant thunder of the broadsides, told of the deadly work going on. At a little distance were the "Countess of Scarborough" and the "Pallas," linked in deadly combat, and adding the roar of their cannon to the general turmoil. It seemed to the watchers on the heights that war was coming very close to England.

The "Serapis" first succeeded in getting a raking position; and, as she slowly crossed her antagonist's bow, her guns were fired, loaded again, and again discharged, — the heavy bolts crashing into the "Richard's" bow, and ranging aft, tearing the flesh of the brave fellows on the decks, and cutting through timbers and cordage in their frightful course. At this moment, the Americans almost despaired of the termination of the conflict. The "Richard" proved to be old and rotten, and the enemy's shot seemed to tear her timbers to pieces; while the "Serapis" was new, with timbers that withstood the shock of the balls like steel armor. Jones saw that in a battle with great guns he was sure to be the loser. He therefore resolved to board.

Soon the "Richard" made an attempt to cross the bows of the "Serapis," but not having way enough failed; and the "Serapis" ran foul of her, with her long bowsprit projecting over the stern of the American ship. Springing from the quarter deck, Jones with his own hands swung grappling-irons into the rigging of the enemy, and made the ships fast. As he bent to his work, he was a prominent target for every sharp-shooter on the British vessel, and the bullets hummed thick about his ears; but he never flinched. His work done, he clambered back to the quarter-deck, and set about gathering the boarders. The two vessels swung alongside each other. The cannonading was redoubled, and the heavy ordnance of the "Serapis" told fearfully upon the "Richard." The American gunners were driven from their guns by the flying cloud of shot and splinters. Each party thought the other was about to board. The darkness and the smoke made all vision impossible; and the boarders on each vessel were crouched behind the bulwarks, ready to give a hot reception to their enemies. This suspense caused a temporary lull in the firing, and Capt. Pearson of the "Serapis" shouted out through the sulphurous blackness, —

"Have you struck your colors?"

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"I have not yet begun to fight," replied Jones; and again the thunder of the cannon awakened the echoes on the distant shore. As the firing recommenced, the two ships broke away and drifted apart. Again the "Serapis" sought to get a raking position; but by this time Jones had determined that his only hope lay in boarding. Terrible had been the execution on his ship. The cockpit was filled with the wounded. The mangled remains of the dead lay thick about the decks. The timbers of the ship were greatly shattered, and her cordage was so badly cut that skilful manœuvring was impossible. Many shot-holes were beneath the water-line, and the hold was rapidly filling. Therefore, Jones determined to run down his enemy, and get out his boarders, at any cost.

Soon the two vessels were foul again. Capt. Pearson, knowing that his advantage lay in long-distance fighting, strove to break away. Jones bent all his energies to the task of keeping the ships together. Meantime the battle raged fiercely. Jones himself, in his official report of the battle, thus describes the course of the fight: —

"I directed the fire of one of the three cannon against the main-mast with double-headed shot, while the other two were exceedingly well served with grape and canister shot, to silence the enemy's musketry, and clear her decks, which was at last effected. The enemy were, as I have since understood, on the instant for calling for quarter, when the cowardice or treachery of three of my under officers induced them to call to the enemy. The English commodore asked me if I demanded quarter; and I having answered him in the negative, they renewed the battle with double fury. They were unable to stand the deck; but the fury of their cannon, especially the lower battery, which was entirely formed of eighteen-pounders, was incessant. Both ships were set on fire in various places, and the scene was dreadful beyond the reach of language. To account for the timidity of my three under officers (I mean the gunner, the carpenter, and the master-at-arms), I must observe that the two first were slightly wounded; and as the ship had received various shots under water, and one of the pumps being shot away, the carpenter expressed his fear that she would sink, and the other two concluded that she was sinking, which occasioned the gunner to run aft on the poop, without my knowledge, to strike the colors. Fortunately for me a cannon-ball had done that before by carrying away the ensign staff: he

was, therefore, reduced to the necessity of sinking — as he supposed — or of calling for quarter; and he preferred the latter."

Indeed, the petty officers were little to be blamed for considering the condition of the "Richard" hopeless. The great guns of the "Serapis," with their muzzles not twenty feet away, were hurling solid shot and grape through the flimsy shell of the American ship. So close together did the two ships come at times, that the rammers were sometimes thrust into the portholes of the opposite ship in loading. When the ships first swung together, the lower ports of the "Serapis" were closed to prevent the Americans boarding through them. But in the heat of the conflict the ports were quickly blown off, and the iron throats of the great guns again protruded, and dealt out their messages of death. How frightful was the scene! In the two great ships were more than seven hundred men, their eyes lighted with the fire of hatred, their faces blackened with powder or made ghastly by streaks of blood. Cries of pain, yells of rage, prayers, and curses rose shrill above the thunderous monotone of the cannonade. Both ships were on fire; and the black smoke of the conflagration, mingled with the gray gunpowder smoke, and lighted up by the red flashes of the cannonade, added to the terrible picturesqueness of the scene.

The "Richard" seemed like a spectre ship, so shattered was her frame-work. From the main-mast to the stern post, her timbers above the water-line were shot away, a few blackened posts alone preventing the upper deck from falling. Through this ruined shell swept the shot of the "Serapis," finding little to impede their flight save human flesh and bone. Great streams of water were pouring into the hold. The pitiful cries of nearly two hundred prisoners aroused the compassion of an officer, who ran below and liberated them. Driven from the hold by the in-pouring water, these unhappy men ran to the deck, only to be swept down by the storm of cannon-shot and bullets. Fire, too, encompassed them; and the flames were so fast sweeping down upon the magazine, that Capt. Jones ordered the powder-kegs to be brought up and thrown into the sea. At this work, and at the pumps, the prisoners were kept employed until the end of the action.

But though the heavy guns of the "Serapis" had it all their own way below, shattering the hull of the "Richard," and driving the

Yankee gunners from their quarters, the conflict, viewed from the tops, was not so one-sided. The Americans crowded on the forecastle and in the tops, where they continued the battle with musketry and hand-grenades, with such murderous effect that the British were driven entirely from the upper deck. Once a party of about one hundred picked men, mustered below by Capt. Pearson, rushed to the upper deck of the "Serapis," and thence made a descent upon the deck of the "Richard," firing pistols, brandishing cutlasses, and yelling like demons. But the Yankee tars were ready for them at that game, and gave the boarders so spirited a reception with pikes and cutlasses, that they were ready enough to swarm over the bulwarks, and seek again the comparative safety of their own ship.

But all this time, though the Americans were making a brave and desperate defence, the tide of battle was surely going against them Though they held the deck of the "Richard" secure against all comers, yet the Englishmen were cutting the ship away from beneath them, with continued heavy broadsides. Suddenly the course of battle was changed, and victory took her stand with the Americans, all through the daring and coolness of one man, — no officer, but an humble jacky.

The rapid and accurate fire of the sharp-shooters on the "Richard" had driven all the riflemen of the "Serapis" from their posts in the tops. Seeing this, the Americans swarmed into the rigging of their own ship, and from that elevated station poured down a destructive fire of hand-grenades upon the decks of the enemy. The sailors on the deck of the "Richard" seconded this attack, by throwing the same missiles through the open ports of the enemy.

At last one American topman, filling a bucket with grenades, and hanging it on his left arm, clambered out on the yard-arm of the "Richard," that stretched far out over the deck of the British ship. Cautiously the brave fellow crept out on the slender spar. His comrades below watched his progress, while the sharp-shooters kept a wary eye on the enemy, lest some watchful rifleman should pick off the adventurous blue-jacket. Little by little the nimble sailor crept out on the yard, until he was over the crowded gun-deck of the "Serapis." Then, lying at full length on the spar, and somewhat protected by it, he began to shower his missiles upon the enemy's gun-deck. Great was

the execution done by each grenade; but at last, one better aimed than the rest fell through the main hatch to the main deck. There was a flash, then a succession of quick explosions; a great sheet of flame gushed up through the hatchway, and a chorus of cries told of some frightful tragedy enacted below.

It seemed that the powder-boys of the "Serapis" had been too active in bringing powder to the guns, and, instead of bringing cartridges as needed, had kept one charge in advance of the demand; so that behind every gun stood a cartridge, making a line of cartridges on the deck from bow to stern. Several cartridges had been broken, so that much loose powder lay upon the deck. This was fired by the discharge of the hand-grenade, and communicated the fire to the cartridges, which exploded in rapid succession, horribly burning scores of men. More than twenty men were killed instantly; and so great was the flame and the force of the explosion, that many of them were left with nothing on but the collars and wristbands of their shirts, and the waistbands of their trousers. It is impossible to conceive of the horror of the sight.

Capt. Pearson in his official report of the battle, speaking of this occurrence, says, "A hand-grenade being thrown in at one of the lower ports, a cartridge of powder was set on fire, the flames of which, running from cartridge to cartridge all the way aft, blew up the whole of the people and officers that were quartered abaft the main-mast; from which unfortunate circumstance those guns were rendered useless for the remainder of the action, and I fear that the greater part of the people will lose their lives."

This event changed the current of the battle. The English were hemmed between decks by the fire of the American topmen, and they found that not even then were they protected from the fiery hail of hand-grenades. The continual pounding of double-headed shot from a gun which Jones had trained upon the main-mast of the enemy had finally cut away that spar; and it fell with a crash upon the deck, bringing down spars and rigging with it. Flames were rising from the tarred cordage, and spreading to the framework of the ship. The Americans saw victory within their grasp.

But at this moment a new and most unsuspected enemy appeared upon the scene. The "Alliance," which had stood aloof during the heat

of the conflict, now appeared, and, after firing a few shots into the "Serapis," ranged slowly down along the "Richard," pouring a murderous fire of grape-shot into the already shattered ship. Jones thus tells the story of this treacherous and wanton assault: —

"I now thought that the battle was at an end. But, to my utter astonishment, he discharged a broadside full into the stern of the 'Bon Homme Richard.' We called to him for God's sake to forbear. Yet he passed along the off-side of the ship, and continued firing. There was no possibility of his mistaking the enemy's ship for the 'Bon Homme Richard,' there being the most essential difference in their appearance and construction. Besides, it was then full moonlight; and the sides of the 'Bon Homme Richard' were all black, and the sides of the enemy's ship were yellow. Yet, for the greater security, I showed the signal for our reconnoissance, by putting out three lanterns, — one at the bow, one at the stern, and one at the middle, in a horizontal line.

"Every one cried that he was firing into the wrong ship, but nothing availed. He passed around, firing into the 'Bon Homme Richard,' head, stern, and broadside, and by one of his volleys killed several of my best men, and mortally wounded a good officer of the forecastle. My situation was truly deplorable. The 'Bon Homme Richard' received several shots under the water from the 'Alliance.' The leak gained on the pumps, and the fire increased much on board both ships. Some officers entreated me to strike, of whose courage and sense I entertain a high opinion. I would not, however, give up the point."

Fortunately Landais did not persist in his cowardly attack upon his friends in the almost sinking ship, but sailed off, and allowed the "Richard" to continue her life-and-death struggle with her enemy. The struggle was not now of long duration; for Capt. Pearson, seeing that his ship was a perfect wreck, and that the fire was gaining head way, hauled down his colors with his own hands, since none of his men could be persuaded to brave the fire from the tops of the "Richard."

As the proud emblem of Great Britain fluttered down, Lieut. Richard Dale turned to Capt. Jones, and asked permission to board the prize. Receiving an affirmative answer, he jumped on the gunwale, seized the mainbrace-pendant, and swung himself upon the quarter-deck of the captured ship. Midshipman Mayrant, with a large party of sailors, followed.

So great was the confusion on the "Serapis," that few of the Englishmen knew that the ship had been surrendered. As Mayrant came aboard, he was mistaken for the leader of a boarding-party, and run through the thigh with a pike.

Capt. Pearson was found standing alone upon the quarter-deck, contemplating with a sad face the shattered condition of his once noble ship, and the dead bodies of his brave fellows lying about the decks. Stepping up to him, Lieut. Dale said, —

"Sir, I have orders to send you on board the ship alongside."

At this moment, the first lieutenant of the "Serapis" came up hastily, and inquired, —

"Has the enemy struck her flag?"

"No, sir," answered Dale. "On the contrary, you have struck to us."

Turning quickly to his commander, the English lieutenant asked, —

"Have you struck, sir?"

"Yes, I have," was the brief reply.

"I have nothing more to say," remarked the officer, and turning about was in the act of going below, when Lieut. Dale stopped him, saying, —

"It is my duty to request you, sir, to accompany Capt. Pearson on board the ship alongside."

"If you will first permit me to go below," responded the other, "I will silence the firing of the lower deck guns."

"This cannot be permitted," was the response; and, silently bowing his head, the lieutenant followed his chief to the victorious ship, while two midshipmen went below to stop the firing.

Lieut. Dale remained in command of the "Serapis." Seating himself on the binnacle, he ordered the lashings which had bound the two ships throughout the bloody conflict to be cut. Then the head-sails were braced back, and the wheel put down. But, as the ship had been anchored at the beginning of the battle, she refused to answer either helm or canvas. Vastly astounded at this, Dale leaped from the binnacle; but his legs refused to support him, and he fell heavily to the deck. His followers sprang to his aid; and it was found that the lieutenant had been severely wounded in the leg by a splinter, but had fought out the battle without ever noticing his hurt.

So ended this memorable battle. But the feelings of pride and exultation so natural to a victor died away in the breast of the American captain as he looked about the scene of wreck and carnage. On all sides lay the mutilated bodies of the gallant fellows who had so bravely stood to their guns amid the storm of death-dealing missiles. There they lay, piled one on top of the other, — some with their agonized writhings caught and fixed by death; others calm and peaceful, as though sleeping. Powder-boys, young and tender, lay by the side of grizzled old seamen. Words cannot picture the scene. In his journal Capt. Jones wrote: —

"A person must have been an eye-witness to form a just idea of the tremendous scene of carnage, wreck, and ruin that everywhere appeared. Humanity cannot but recoil from the prospect of such finished horror, and lament that war should produce such fatal consequences."

But worse than the appearance of the main deck was the scene in the cockpit and along the gun-deck, which had been converted into a temporary hospital. Here lay the wounded, ranged in rows along the deck. Moans and shrieks of agony were heard on every side. The surgeons were busy with their glittering instruments. The tramp of men on the decks overhead, and the creaking of the timbers of the water-logged ship, added to the cries of the wounded, made a perfect bedlam of the place.

It did not take long to discover that the "Bon Homme Richard" was a complete wreck, and in a sinking condition. The gallant old craft had kept afloat while the battle was being fought; but now, that the victory had remained with her, she had given up the struggle against the steadily encroaching waves. The carpenters who had explored the hold came on deck with long faces, and reported that nothing could be done to stop the great holes made by the shot of the "Serapis." Therefore Jones determined to remove his crew and all the wounded to the "Serapis," and abandon the noble "Richard" to her fate. Accordingly, all available hands were put at the pumps, and the work of transferring the wounded was begun. Slings were rigged over the side; and the poor shattered bodies were gently lowered into the boats awaiting them, and, on reaching the "Serapis," were placed tenderly in cots ranged along the main deck. All night the work went on;

THE ACTION BETWEEN THE "BON HOMME RICHARD" AND THE "SERAPIS," SEPTEMBER 23, 1779

and by ten o'clock the next morning there were left on the "Richard" only a few sailors, who alternately worked at the pumps, and fought the steadily encroaching flames.

For Jones did not intend to desert the good old ship without a struggle to save her, even though both fire and water were warring against her. Not until the morning dawned did the Americans fully appreciate how shattered was the hulk that stood between them and a watery grave. Fenimore Cooper, the pioneer historian of the United States navy, writes: —

"When the day dawned, an examination was made into the situation of the 'Richard.' Abaft on a line with those guns of the 'Serapis' that had not been disabled by the explosion, the timbers were found to be nearly all beaten in, or beaten out, — for in this respect there was little difference between the two sides of the ship, — and it was said that her poop and upper decks would have fallen into the gun-room, but for a few buttocks that had been missed. Indeed, so large was the vacuum, that most of the shot fired from this part of the 'Serapis,' at the close of the action, must have gone through the 'Richard' without touching any thing. The rudder was cut from the stern post, and the transoms were nearly driven out of her. All the after-part of the ship, in particular, that was below the quarter-deck was torn to pieces; and nothing had saved those stationed on the quarter-deck but the impossibility of sufficiently elevating guns that almost touched their object."

Despite the terribly shattered condition of the ship, her crew worked manfully to save her. But, after fighting the flames and working the pumps all day, they were reluctantly forced to abandon the good ship to her fate. It was nine o'clock at night, that the hopelessness of the task became evident. The "Richard" rolled heavily from side to side. The sea was up to her lower port-holes. At each roll the water gushed through her port-holes, and swashed through the hatchways. At ten o'clock, with a last dying surge, the shattered hulk plunged to her final resting-place, carrying with her the bodies of her dead. They had died the noblest of all deaths, — the death of a patriot killed in doing battle for his country. They receive the grandest of all burials, — the burial of a sailor who follows his ship to her grave, on the hard, white sand, in the calm depths of the ocean.

How many were there that went down with the ship? History does not accurately state. Capt. Jones himself was never able to tell how great was the number of dead upon his ship. The most careful estimate puts the number at forty-two. Of the wounded on the American ship, there were about forty. All these were happily removed from the "Richard" before she sunk.

On the "Serapis" the loss was much greater; but here, too, history is at fault, in that no official returns of the killed and wounded have been preserved. Capt. Jones's estimate, which is probably nearly correct, put the loss of the English ship at about a hundred killed, and an equal number wounded.

The sinking of the "Richard" left the "Serapis" crowded with wounded of both nations, prisoners, and the remnant of the crew of the sunken ship. No time was lost in getting the ship in navigable shape, and in clearing away the traces of the battle. The bodies of the dead were thrown overboard. The decks were scrubbed and sprinkled with hot vinegar. The sound of the hammer and the saw was heard on every hand, as the carpenters stopped the leaks, patched the deck, and rigged new spars in place of those shattered by the "Richard's" fire. All three of the masts had gone by the board. Jury masts were rigged; and with small sails stretched on these the ship beat about the ocean, the plaything of the winds. Her consorts had left her. Landais, seeing no chance to rob Jones of the honor of the victory, had taken the "Alliance" to other waters. The "Pallas" had been victorious in her contest with the "Countess of Scarborough;" and, as soon as the issue of the conflict between the "Bon Homme Richard" and the "Serapis" had become evident, she made off with her prize, intent upon gaining a friendly port. The "Richard," after ten days of drifting, finally ran into Texel, in the north of Holland.

The next year was one of comparative inactivity for Jones. He enjoyed for a time the praise of all friends of the revolting colonies. He was the lion of Paris. Then came the investigation into the action of Landais at the time of the great battle. Though his course at that time was one of open treachery, inspired by his wish to have Jones strike to the "Serapis," that he might have the honor of capturing both ships, Landais escaped any punishment at the hands of his French

compatriots. But he was relieved of the command of the "Alliance," which was given to Jones. Highly incensed at this action, the erratic Frenchman incited the crew of the "Alliance" to open mutiny, and, taking command of the ship himself, left France and sailed for America, leaving Commodore Jones in the lurch. On his arrival at Philadelphia, Landais strove to justify his action by blackening the character of Jones, but failed in this, and was dismissed the service. His actions should be regarded with some charity, for the man was doubtless of unsound mind. His insanity became even more evident after his dismissal from the navy; and from that time, until the time of his death, his eccentricities made him generally regarded as one mentally unsound.

Jones, having lost the "Alliance" by the mutiny of Landais, remained abroad, waiting for another ship. He travelled widely on the Continent, and was lavishly entertained by the rich and noble of every nation. Not until October, 1780, did he again tread the deck of a vessel under his own command.

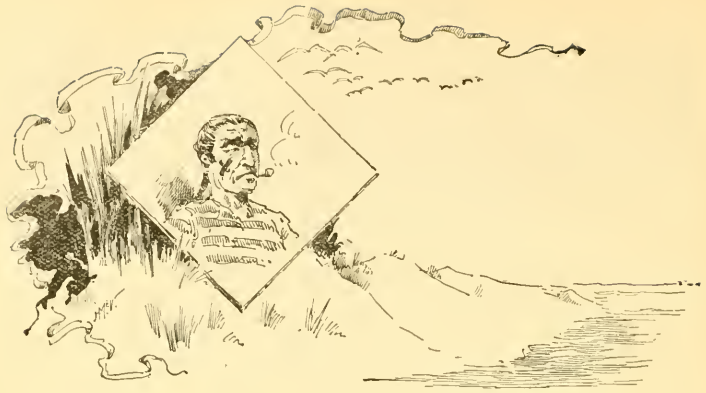
The ship which the French Government finally fitted out and put in command of Paul Jones was the "Ariel," a small twenty-gun ship. This vessel the adventurous sailor packed full of powder and cannon-balls, taking only provisions enough for nine weeks, and evidently expecting to live off the prizes he calculated upon taking. He sailed from l'Orient on a bright October afternoon, under clear skies, and with a fair wind, intending to proceed directly to the coast of America. But the first night out there arose a furious gale. The wind howled through the rigging, tore the sails from the ring-bolts, snapped the spars, and seriously wrecked the cordage of the vessel. The great waves, lashed into fury by the hurricane, smote against the sides of the little craft as though they would burst through her sheathing. The ship rolled heavily; and the yards, in their grand sweep from side to side, often plunged deep into the foaming waves. At last so great became the strain upon the vessel, that the crew were set to work with axes to cut away the foremast. Balancing themselves upon the tossing, slippery deck, holding fast to a rope with one hand, while with the other they swung the axe, the gallant fellows finally cut so deep into the heart of the stout spar, that a heavy roll of the ship made it snap off short, and it fell alongside, where it

hung by the cordage. The wreck was soon cleared away; and as this seemed to ease the ship somewhat, and as she was drifting about near the dreaded rock of Penmarque, the anchors were got out. But in the mean time the violent rolling of the "Ariel" had thrown the heel of the main-mast from the step; and the heavy mast was reeling about, threatening either to plough its way upward through the gun-deck, or to crash through the bottom of the ship. It was determined to cut away this mast; but, before this could be done, it fell, carrying with it the mizzen-mast, and crushing in the deck on which it fell. Thus dismasted, the "Ariel" rode out the gale. All night and all the next day she was tossed about on the angry waters. Her crew thought that their last hour had surely come. Over the shrieking of the gale, and the roaring of the waves, rose that steady, all-pervading sound, which brings horror to the mind of the sailor, — the dull, monotonous thunder of the breakers on the reef of Penmarque. But the "Ariel" was not fated to be ground to pieces on the jagged teeth of the cruel reef. Though she drifted about, the plaything of the winds and the waves, she escaped the jaws of Penmarque. Finally the gale subsided; and, with hastily devised jury-masts, the shattered ship was taken back to l'Orient to refit.

Two months were consumed in the work of getting the shattered vessel ready for sea. When she again set out, she met with no mishap, until, when near the American coast, she fell in with a British vessel to which she gave battle. A sharp action of a quarter of an hour forced the Englishman to strike his colors; but, while the Americans were preparing to board the prize, she sailed away, vastly to the chagrin and indignation of her would-be captors.

The short cruise of the "Ariel" was the last service rendered by Paul Jones to the American Colonies. On his arrival at Philadelphia, he was dined and fêted to his heart's desire; he received a vote of thanks from Congress; he became the idol of the populace. But the necessities of the struggling colonies were such that they were unable to build for him a proper war-ship, and he remained inactive upon shore until the close of the Revolution, when he went abroad, and took service with Russia. He is the one great character in the naval history of the Revolution. He is the first heroic figure in American naval annals. Not until years after his death did men begin to know him at his true worth. He was too often

looked upon as a man of no patriotism, but wholly mercenary; courageous, but only with the daring of a pirate. Not until he had died a lonely death, estranged from the country he had so nobly served, did men come to know Paul Jones as a model naval officer, high-minded in his patriotism, pure in his life, elevated in his sentiments, and as courageous as a lion.



## CHAPTER X.

CAREER OF NICHOLAS BIDDLE. — HIS EXPLOIT AT LEWISTON JAIL. — CRUISE IN THE "RANDOLPH." — BATTLE WITH THE "YARMOUTH." — THE FATAL EXPLOSION. — SAMUEL TUCKER. — HIS BOYHOOD. — ENCOUNTER WITH CORSAIRS. — CRUISING IN THE "FRANKLIN." — IN COMMAND OF THE "BOSTON." — ANECDOTES OF CAPT. TUCKER.

IN THE career of Paul Jones is to be found the record of the most stirring events of the Revolution; but there were other commanders in the young American navy no less daring than he. As the chief naval representative of the Colonies who cruised in European waters, Jones achieved a notoriety somewhat out of proportion to his actual achievements. But other brave seamen did gallant service along the Atlantic coast for the cause of the struggling nation, and, by their daring and nautical skill, did much to bring the war of the Revolution to its happy conclusion.

We abandoned our consideration of the general naval events of the war, to turn to a recountal of the exploits of Paul Jones at the close of the year 1776. Hostilities on the water during that year were confined to sharp, but short, actions between small men-of-war or privateers. The Americans

lacked the discipline and experience necessary to win for themselves any great reputation on the water. Though they showed themselves full of dash and spirit, they were deficient in discipline and staying qualities. Nevertheless, the record of the year was by no means discreditable to so young a naval organization.

Aside from the naval operations on the ocean, the year 1776 had seen the thick clouds of gunpowder-smoke floating across the placid surface of Lake Champlain, while the wooded hills that surrounded that lake and Lake George more than once resounded with thunderous tones of cannon. The hostile meetings of the English and Americans on the interior lakes are hardly to be classed as naval engagements. The vessels were chiefly gondolas and galleys, and many of their crews had never seen salt water. On the British side the forces were more considerable. In October, 1776, the British had on Lake Champlain at least one full-rigged ship; and their schooners and galleys were all manned by trained sailors, drafted from men-of-war laid up in the St. Lawrence. This force was under the command of Capt. Douglass of the frigate "Isis." The Americans, on the contrary, had manned their fleet with recruits from the army; and the forces were under the command of an army-officer, Gen. Benedict Arnold, the story of whose later treachery is familiar to every American. It was late in October that the two hostile fleets met in deadly conflict, and a few short hours were enough to prove to the Americans that they were greatly overmatched. Such of their vessels as were not sunk were captured and burned by the enemy; while their crews escaped into the woods, and ultimately rejoined Arnold's army, from which they had been drafted.

We pass thus hastily over the so-called naval operations on Lake Champlain, because they were properly not naval operations at all, but merely incidents in the shore campaign. The fact that a few soldiers hastily build a small flotilla, and with it give battle to an enemy on the water, does not in any sense constitute a naval battle.

The year 1777 witnessed many notable naval events. Hostilities along the seaboard became more lively. New vessels were put into commission. England despatched a larger naval armament to crush her rebellious colonies. The records of the admiralty show, that at the beginning of that year Parliament voted to the navy forty-five thousand men. The Americans were able to array against this huge force only some four thousand, scattered upon thirteen small vessels-of-war.

One of the first ships to get to sea in this year was the "Randolph;" a new frigate commanded by Nicholas Biddle, who thus early in the war had won the confidence of the people and the naval authorities. In command of the little cruiser "Andrea Doria," Biddle had cruised off the coast of Newfoundland in 1776. His success upon that cruise has already been noted.

Biddle was a man possessing to the fullest degree that primary qualification of a good naval officer,—an indomitable will. In illustration of his determination, a story is related concerning an incident that occurred just as the "Andrea Doria" had left the Capes of the Delaware. Two of her crew had deserted, and, being apprehended by the authorities on shore, were lodged in Lewistown jail. But the sheriff and his deputies found it easier to turn the key on the fugitive tars, than to keep them in control while they lay in durance vile. Gathering all the benches, chairs, and tables that lay about the jail,—for the lockup of those days was not the trim affair of steel and iron seen to-day,—the unrepentant jackies built for themselves a barricade, and, snugly entrenched behind it, shouted out bold defiance to any and all who should come to take them. The jail authorities had committed the foolish error of neglecting to disarm the prisoners when they were captured; and, as each had a brace of ugly pistols in his belt, the position of the two behind their barricade was really one of considerable strength. The prison officials dared not attempt to dislodge the warlike tars. The militia company of the town was ordered to the scene, but even this body of soldiery dared not force the prison door. Accordingly they determined to let time do the work, and starve the rogues out of their retreat. At this juncture Capt. Biddle came ashore. He had no intention of letting his trim ship lie idly in the offing while two mutinous blue-jackets were slowly starved into subjection. The "Andrea Doria" needed the men, and there must be no more delay. A captain in the American navy was not to be defied by two of his own people.

Therefore, seizing a loaded pistol in each hand, Capt. Biddle walked to the prison, accompanied only by a young midshipman. As the two pounded upon the heavy barred door, the crowd outside fell back, expecting the bullets to fly.

"Open this door, Green," shouted Biddle to one of the prisoners, whom he knew by name.

"Try to open it yourself," came the reply from within, with an accompanying oath. "The first man that shows his head inside this door gets a bullet."

Green was known as a bold, desperate man; but Biddle did not hesitate a moment. Ordering the bystanders to break down the door, he waited quietly, until a crash, and the sudden scattering of the crowd, gave notice that the way into the prison was clear. Then gripping his pistols tightly, but with his arms hanging loosely at his sides, he advanced upon the deserters. Behind the barricade stood Green, his eyes blazing with rage, his pistol levelled. Biddle faced him quietly.

"Now, Green, if you don't take a good aim, you are a dead man," said he.

With a muttered curse, the mutineer dropped his weapon. The cool determination of the captain awed him. In a few minutes he, with his companion, was on his way to the ship in irons.

It was in February, 1777, that the stanch new frigate "Randolph," with Biddle in command, set sail from Philadelphia. Hardly had she reached the high seas when a terrific gale set in, from which the "Randolph" emerged, shorn of her tapering masts. As she lay a helpless wreck tossing on the waves, the hard work necessary to put her in decent shape again induced Biddle to accede to the request of a number of British prisoners on board, who wished to be enrolled among the crew of the "Randolph." This proved to be an unfortunate move; for the Englishmen were no sooner enrolled on the ship's list than they began plotting mutiny, and the uprising reached such a stage that they assembled on the gun-deck, and gave three cheers. But the firm and determined stand of the captain and his officers overawed the mutineers, and they returned to their places after the ringleaders had been made to suffer at the gratings. But the spirit of disaffection rife amid his crew, and the crippled condition of his ship, determined Biddle to proceed forthwith to Charleston to refit.

But a few days were spent in port. Getting to sea again, the "Randolph" fell in with the "True Briton," a twenty-gun ship, flying the British colors. Though the captain of the "True Briton" had often boasted of what he would do should he encounter the "Randolph," his courage then failed him, and he fled. The "Randolph" gave chase, and,

proving to be a speedy ship, soon overhauled the prize, which struck without waiting for a volley. Three other vessels that had been cruising with the "True Briton" were also captured, and with her rich prizes the "Randolph" returned proudly to Charleston. Here her usefulness ceased for a time; for a superior force of British men-of-war appeared off the harbor, and by them the "Randolph" was blockaded for the remainder of the season.

Early in 1778 Biddle again took the sea with the "Randolph," supported this time by four small vessels, fitted out by the South Carolina authorities. They were the "Gen. Moultrie," eighteen guns; the "Polly," sixteen; the "Notre Dame," sixteen; and the "Fair American," sixteen. With this force Capt. Biddle set out in search of a British squadron known to be cruising thereabouts, and probably the same vessels that had kept him a prisoner during so much of the previous year.

On the 7th of March, 1778, the lookouts on the smaller vessels saw a signal thrown out from the masthead of the "Randolph," which announced a sail in sight. Chase was at once given; and by four o'clock she was near enough for the Americans to see that she was a large ship, and apparently a man-of-war. About eight o'clock the stranger was near enough the squadron for them to make out that she was a heavy frigate.

The Englishman was not slow to suspect the character of the vessels with which he had fallen in, and firing a shot across the bows of the "Moultrie," demanded her name.

"The 'Polly' of New York," was the response.

Leaving the "Moultrie" unmolested, the stranger ranged up alongside the "Randolph," and ordered her to show her colors. This Biddle promptly did; and as the American flag went fluttering to the fore, the ports of the "Randolph" were thrown open, and a broadside poured into the hull of the Englishman. The stranger was not slow in replying, and the action became hot and deadly. Capt. Biddle was wounded in the thigh early in the battle. As he fell to the deck, his officers crowded about him, thinking that he was killed; but he encouraged them to return to their posts, and, ordering a chair to be placed on the quarter-deck, remained on deck, giving orders, and cheering on his men. It is said that Capt. Biddle was wounded by a shot from the "Moultrie," which flew wide of its intended mark.

For twenty minutes the battle raged, and there was no sign of weakening on the part of either contestant. Suddenly the sound of the cannonade was deadened by a thunderous roar. The people on the other ships saw a huge column of fire and smoke rise where the "Randolph" had floated. The English vessel was thrown violently on her beam-ends. The sky was darkened with flying timbers and splinters, which fell heavily into the sea. The "Randolph" had blown up. A spark, a red-hot shot, some fiery object, had penetrated her magazine, and she was annihilated.

The horrible accident which destroyed the "Randolph" came near being the end of the "Yarmouth," her antagonist. The two battling ships were close together; so close, in fact, that after the explosion Capt. Morgan of the "Fair American" hailed the "Yarmouth" to ask how Capt. Biddle was. The English ship was fairly covered with bits of the flying wreck. Some heavy pieces of timber falling from the skies badly shattered her main-deck. An American ensign, closely rolled up, fell on her forecastle, not even singed by the fiery ordeal through which it had passed.

The "Yarmouth" wasted little time in wonder over the fate of her late antagonist. In all the mass of floating wreckage that covered the sea, there appeared to be no living thing. The four smaller American vessels, dismayed by the fate of their consort, were making good their escape. Without more ado, the "Yarmouth" set out in chase.

Four days later, the Americans having escaped, the "Yarmouth" was again cruising near the scene of the action. A raft was discovered on the ocean, which seemed to support some living creatures. Running down upon it, four wretched, emaciated men were discovered clinging to a piece of wreckage, and wildly waving for assistance. They were taken aboard the British man-of-war, and given food and drink, of both of which they partook greedily; for their sole sustenance during the four days for which they clung to their frail raft was rain-water sucked from a piece of blanket.

So died Capt. Nicholas Biddle, blown to atoms by the explosion of his ship in the midst of battle. Though but a young officer, not having completed his twenty-seventh year, he left an enduring name in the naval annals of his country. Though his service was short, the fame he won was great.

Among the more notable commanders who did good service on the sea was Capt. Samuel Tucker, who was put in command of the frigate "Boston" in the latter part of the year 1777. Tucker was an old and tried seaman, and is furthermore one of the most picturesque figures in the naval history of the Revolution. He first showed his love for the sea in the way that Yankee boys from time immemorial have shown it, — by running away from home, and shipping as a cabin-boy. The ship which he chose was the British sloop-of-war "Royal George," and the boy found himself face to face with the rigid naval discipline of the British service at that time. But he stuck manfully to the career he had chosen, and gradually mastered not only the details of a seaman's duty, but much of the art of navigation; so that when finally he got his discharge from the "Royal George," he shipped as second mate on a Salem merchantman. It was on his first voyage in this capacity that he first showed the mettle that was in him. Two Algerine corsairs, their decks crowded with men, their long low hulls cleaving the waves like dolphins, had given chase to the merchantman. The captain of the threatened ship grew faint-hearted: he sought courage in liquor, and soon became unable to manage his vessel. Tucker took the helm. He saw that there was no chance of escape in flight, for the corsairs were too fleet. There was no hope of victory in a battle, for the pirates were too strong. But the trim New England schooner minded her helm better than her lanteen-rigged pursuers, and this fact Tucker put to good account.

Putting his helm hard down, he headed the schooner directly for the piratical craft. By skilful manœuvring, he secured such a position that either pirate, by firing upon him, was in danger of firing into his fellow corsair. This position he managed to maintain until nightfall, when he slipped away, and by daylight was snugly at anchor in the port of Lisbon.

For some time after this episode, the record of Tucker's seafaring life is lost. Certain it is that he served in the British navy as an officer for some time, and was master of a merchantman for several years.

When the Revolution broke out, Samuel Tucker was in London. Being offered by a recruiting officer a commission in either the army or navy, if he would consent to serve "his gracious Majesty," Tucker very

rashly responded, "Hang his gracious Majesty! Do you think I would serve against my country?"

Soon a hue and cry was out for Tucker. He was charged with treason, and fled into the country to the house of a tavern-keeper whom he knew, who sheltered him until he could make his escape from England.

Hardly had he arrived in America, when Gen. Washington commissioned him captain of the "Franklin," and instructed him to proceed directly to sea. An express with the commission and instructions was hurried off to Marblehead, then a straggling little city. He was instructed to find the "Hon. Samuel Tucker," and to deliver to him the packets in his charge. When the messenger arrived, Tucker was working in his yard. The messenger saw a rough-looking person, roughly clad, with a tarpaulin hat, and his neck bound with a flaming red bandanna handkerchief. Never once thinking this person could be the man he sought, he leaned from his horse, and shouted out roughly, —

"I say, fellow, I wish you would tell me whether the Hon. Samuel Tucker lives hereabouts."

Tucker looked up with a quizzical smile, and surveyed the speaker from under the wide rim of his tarpaulin, as he answered, —

"Honorable, honorable! There's none of that name in Marblehead. He must be one of the Tuckers in Salem. I'm the only Samuel Tucker here."

"Capt. Glover told me he knew him," responded the messenger, "and described his house, gable-end on the seaside, none near it. Faith, this looks like the very place!"

With a laugh, Tucker then confessed his identity, and asked the messenger his business. Receiving the commission and instructions, he at once began his preparations for leaving home, and at daybreak the next morning was on his way to Beverly, where lay anchored the first ship he was to command in the service of his country.

In the "Franklin" Capt. Tucker did some most efficient work. His name appears constantly in the letters of Gen. Washington, and in the State papers making up the American archives, as having sent in valuable prizes. At one time we read of the capture of "a brigantine from Scotland, worth fifteen thousand pounds sterling;" again, of six gun-boats,

and of brigs laden with wine and fruit. During the year 1776, he took not less than thirty — and probably a few more — ships, brigs, and smaller vessels. Nor were all these vessels taken without some sharp fighting.

Of one battle Tucker himself speaks in one of his letters. First telling how his wife made the colors for his ship, "the field of which was white, and the union was green, made of cloth of her own purchasing, and at her own expense," he goes on to write of one of his battles: —

"Those colors I wore in honor of the country, — which has so nobly rewarded me for my past services, — and the love of their maker, until I fell in with Col. Archibald Campbell in the ship "George," and brig "Arabella," transports with about two hundred and eighty Highland troops on board, of Gen. Frazer's corps. About ten P.M. a severe conflict ensued, which held about two hours and twenty minutes. I conquered them with great carnage on their side, it being in the night, and my small bark, about seventy tons burden, being very low in the water, I received no damage in loss of men, but lost a complete set of new sails by the passing of their balls; then the white field and pine-tree union were riddled to atoms. I was then immediately supplied with a new suit of sails, and a new suit of colors, made of canvas and bunting of my own prize-goods."

Another time, during the same year, Tucker took two British ships near Marblehead. So near was the scene of action to the house of Capt. Tucker, that his wife and her sister, hearing the sound of cannonading, ascended a high hill in the vicinity, and from that point viewed the action through a spy-glass.

Capt. Tucker kept the sea in the "Franklin" until late in the winter. When finally the cold weather and high winds forced him to put his ship out of commission, he went to his home at Marblehead. He remained there but a short time; for in March, 1777, he was put in command of the "Boston," a frigate of twenty-four guns. In this vessel he cruised during the year with varying success.

Feb. 10, 1778, Capt. Tucker was ordered to carry the Hon. John Adams to France, as envoy from the United States. The voyage was full of incidents. Feeling impressed with the gravity of the charge laid upon him, Capt. Tucker chose a course which he hoped would enable him to steer clear of the horde of British men-of-war which then infested

the American coast. But in so doing he fell in with a natural enemy, which came near proving fatal. A terrific thunderstorm, gradually growing into a tornado, crossed the path of the ship. The ocean was lashed into waves mountain high. The crash of the thunder rent the sky. A stroke of lightning struck the main-mast, and ripped up the deck, narrowly missing the magazine. The ship sprung a leak; and the grewsome sound of the pumps mingled with the roar of the waves, and the shrieking of the winds. For several days the stormy weather continued. Then followed a period of calm, which the captain well employed in repairing the rigging, and exercising the men with the guns and small-arms. Many ships had been sighted, and some, evidently men-of-war, had given chase; but the "Boston" succeeded in showing them all a clean pair of heels.

"What would you do," said Mr. Adams one day, as he stood with the captain watching three ships that were making desperate efforts to overhaul the "Boston," "if you could not escape, and they should attack you?"

"As the first is far in advance of the others, I should carry her by boarding, leading the boarders myself," was the response. "I should take her; for no doubt a majority of her crew, being pressed men, would turn to and join me. Having taken her, I should be matched, and could fight the other two."

Such language as this coming from many men would be considered mere foolhardy boasting. But Tucker was a man not given to brag. Indeed, he was apt to be very laconic in speaking of his exploits. A short time after his escape from the three ships, he fell in with an English armed vessel of no small force, and captured her. His only comment on the action in his journal reads, "I fired a gun, and they returned three; and down went the colors."

John Adams, however, told a more graphic story of this capture. Tucker, as soon as he saw an armed vessel in his path, hastily called his crew to order, and bore down upon her. When the roll of the drum, calling the people to quarters, resounded through the ship, Mr. Adams seized a musket, and took his stand with the marines. Capt. Tucker, seeing him there, requested him to go below, and upon his desire being disregarded, put his hand upon the envoy's shoulder, and in a tone of authority said, —

"Mr. Adams, I am commanded by the Continental Congress to deliver you safe in France, and you must go below."

The envoy smilingly complied, and just at that moment the enemy let fly her broadside. The shot flew through the rigging, doing but little damage. Though the guns of the "Boston" were shotted, and the gunners stood at their posts with smoking match-stocks, Capt. Tucker gave no order to fire, but seemed intent upon the manœuvres of the ships. The eager blue-jackets begun to murmur, and the chorus of questions and oaths was soon so great that the attention of Tucker was attracted. He looked at the row of eager faces on the gun-deck, and shouted out, —

"Hold on, my men! I wish to save that egg without breaking the shell."

Soon after, Tucker brought his broadside to bear on the stern of the enemy, and she struck without more ado. She proved to be an armed ship, the "Martha."

After this encounter, nothing more of moment occurred on the voyage; and the "Boston" reached Bordeaux, and landed her distinguished passenger in safety. Two months later she left Bordeaux, in company with a fleet of twenty sail, one of which was the "Ranger," formerly commanded by Paul Jones. With these vessels he cruised for a time in European waters, but returned to the American coast in the autumn. His services for the rest of that year, and the early part of 1779, we must pass over hastily, though many were the prizes that fell into his clutches.

Many anecdotes are told of Tucker. His shrewdness, originality, and daring made him a favorite theme for story-tellers. But, unhappily, the anecdotes have generally no proof of their truth. One or two, however, told by Capt. Tucker's biographer, Mr. John H. Sheppard, will not be out of place here.

In one the story is told that Tucker fell in with a British frigate which he knew to be sent in search of him. Showing the English flag, he sailed boldly towards the enemy, and in answer to her hail said he was Capt. Gordon of the English navy, out in search of the "Boston," commanded by the rebel Tucker.

"I'll carry him to New York, dead or alive," said Tucker.

"Have you seen him?" was asked.

"Well, I've heard of him," was the response; "and they say he is a hard customer."

All this time Tucker had been manœuvring to secure a raking

position. Behind the closed ports of the "Boston," the men stood at their guns, ready for the word of command. Just as the American had secured the position desired, a sailor in the tops of the British vessel cried out, —

"That is surely Tucker; we shall have a devil of a smell directly."

Hearing this, Tucker ordered the American flag hoisted, and the ports thrown open. Hailing his astonished foe, he cried, —

"The time I proposed talking with you is ended. This is the 'Boston,' frigate. I am Samuel Tucker, but no rebel. Fire, or strike your flag."

The Englishman saw he had no alternative but to strike. This he did without firing a gun. The vessel, though not named in the anecdote, was probably the "Pole," of the capture of which Tucker frequently speaks in his letters.

Of the part Tucker played in the siege of Charleston, of his capture there by the British, and of his exchange, we shall speak later. At that disaster four American frigates were lost: so many of the best naval officers were thrown out of employment. Among them was Tucker; but ever anxious for active service, he obtained the sloop-of-war "Thorn," which he himself had captured, and went out as a privateer. In this vessel he saw some sharp service. One engagement was thus described to Mr. Sheppard by a marine named Everett who was on board: —

"We had been cruising about three weeks when we fell in with an English packet of twenty-two guns and one hundred men. Not long after she was discovered, the commodore called up his crew, and said, 'She means to fight us; and if we go alongside like men, she is ours in thirty minutes, but if we can't go as men we have no business here.' He then told them he wanted no cowards on deck, and requested those who were willing to fight to go down the starboard, and those who were unwilling the larboard gangway. Every man and boy took the first, signifying his willingness to meet the enemy.

"As Mr. Everett was passing by, the commodore asked him, —

"'Are you willing to go alongside of her?'

"'Yes, sir,' was the reply.

"In mentioning this conversation, however, Mr. Everett candidly confessed, 'I did not tell him the truth, for I would rather have been in my father's cornfield.'

"After the commanders of these two vessels, as they drew near, had hailed each other in the customary way when ships meet at sea, the captain of the English packet cried out roughly from the quarter-deck, —

"'Haul down your colors, or I'll sink you!'

"'Ay, ay, sir; directly,' answered Tucker calmly. And he then ordered the helmsman to steer the 'Thorn' right under the stern of the packet, luff up under her lee quarters, and range alongside of her. The order was promptly executed. The two vessels were laid side by side, within pistol shot of each other. While the 'Thorn' was getting into position, the enemy fired a full broadside at her which did but little damage. As soon as she was brought completely alongside her adversary, Tucker thundered out to his men to fire, and a tremendous discharge followed; and, as good aim had been taken, a dreadful carnage was seen in that ill-fated vessel. It was rapidly succeeded by a fresh volley of artillery, and in twenty-seven minutes a piercing cry was heard from the English vessel: 'Quarters, for God's sake! Our ship is sinking. Our men are dying of their wounds.'

"To this heart-rending appeal Capt. Tucker exclaimed, —

"'How can you expect quarters while that British flag is flying?'

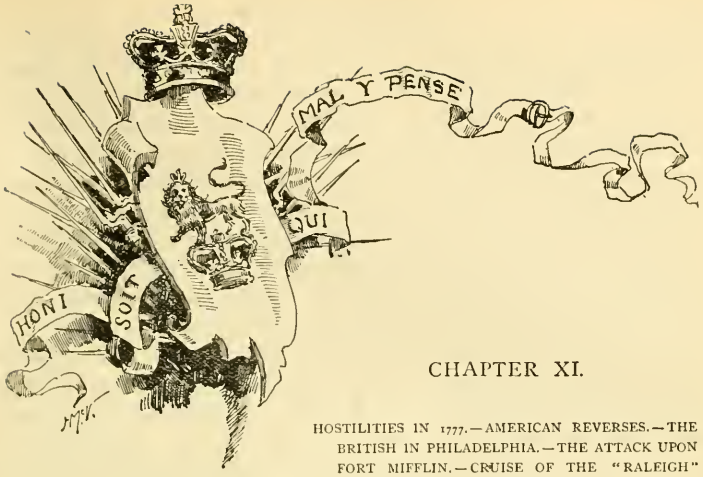
"The sad answer came back, 'Our halliards are shot away.'

"'Then cut away your ensign staff, or ye'll all be dead men.'

"It was done immediately. Down came the colors, the din of cannonading ceased, and only the groans of the wounded and dying were heard.

"Fifteen men, with carpenters, surgeon, and their leader, were quickly on the deck of the prize. Thirty-four of her crew, with her captain, were either killed or wounded. Her decks were besmeared with blood, and in some places it stood in clotted masses to the tops of the sailors' slippers. The gloomy but needful work of amputating limbs, and laying out the dead, was begun; and every effort was made to render the wounded prisoners as comfortable as possible."

Here we must take leave of Commodore Tucker and his exploits. As a privateersman, he continued to do daring work to the end of the war. He fought at least one more bloody action. He was captured once and escaped. But the recountal of his romantic career must now yield to our chronological survey of the lesser naval events of the Revolution.




## CHAPTER XI.

HOSTILITIES IN 1777.—AMERICAN REVERSES.—THE BRITISH IN PHILADELPHIA.—THE ATTACK UPON FORT MIFFLIN.—CRUISE OF THE "RALEIGH" AND THE "ALFRED."—TORPEDO WARFARE.—THE BATTLE OF THE KEGS.

WE HAVE now heard of the exploits of some of the chief naval leaders of the war of the Revolution. But there were many dashing engagements in which the great commanders took no part, and many important captures made by vessels sailing under the flags of the individual colonies, which deserve attention.

The American cause on the water suffered some rather severe reverses in the early part of 1777. In March, the brig "Cabot" fell in with the British frigate "Milford," and was so hard pressed that she was run ashore on the coast of Nova Scotia. The crew had hardly time to get ashore before the British took possession of the stranded craft. The Americans were left helpless, in a wild and little settled country, but finally made their way through the woods to a harbor. Here they found a coasting schooner lying at anchor, upon which they promptly seized, and in which they escaped to Portsmouth. In the mean time, the British had got the "Cabot" afloat again.

Two months later, or in the early part of May, two United States vessels, the "Hancock" thirty-two, Capt. Manly, and the "Boston" twenty-four, Capt. Hector McNeil, sailed in company from Boston. When

a few days out, a strange sail was sighted, and proved to be a British frigate. The "Hancock" soon came near enough to her to exchange broadsides, as the two vessels were going on opposite tacks. The enemy, however, seemed anxious to avoid a conflict, and exerted every effort to escape. Manly, having great confidence in the speed of his ship, gave chase. Calling the people from the guns, he bade them make a leisurely breakfast, and get ready for the work before them. The "Hancock" soon overhauled the chase, which began firing her guns as fast as they would bear. The Americans, however, made no response until fairly alongside, when they let fly a broadside with ringing cheers. The action lasted for an hour and a half before the enemy struck. She proved to be the "Fox," twenty-eight. She was badly cut up by the American fire, and had thirty-two dead and wounded men on board. The loss on the "Hancock" amounted to only eight men. In this running fight the "Boston" was hopelessly distanced, coming up just in time to fire a gun as the British ensign came fluttering from the peak.

Putting a prize crew on the "Fox," the three vessels continued their cruise. A week passed, and no sail was seen. Somewhat rashly Capt. Manly turned his ship's prow toward Halifax, then, as now, the chief British naval station on the American coast. When the three ships appeared off the entrance to the harbor of Halifax, the British men-of-war inside quickly spied them, raised anchor, and came crowding out in hot pursuit. There was the "Rainbow" forty-four, the "Flora" thirty-two, and the "Victor" eighteen, besides two others whose names could not be ascertained. The Americans saw that they had stirred up a nest of hornets, and sought safety in flight. The three British vessels whose names are given gave chase. The "Boston," by her swift sailing, easily kept out of the reach of the enemy. The "Fox," however, was quickly overhauled by the "Flora," and struck her flag after exchanging a few broadsides. The "Hancock" for a time seemed likely to escape, but at last the "Rainbow" began gradually to overhaul her. Capt. Manly, finding escape impossible, began manœuvring with the intention of boarding his powerful adversary; but the light winds made this impossible, and he suddenly found himself under the guns of the "Rainbow," with the "Victor" astern, in a raking position. Seeing no hope for success in so unequal a conflict, Manly struck his flag. In the mean time the "Boston"

had calmly proceeded upon her way, leaving her consorts to their fate. For having thus abandoned his superior officer, Capt. McNeil was dismissed the service upon his return to Boston.

These losses were to some degree offset by the good fortune of the "Trumbull," twenty-eight, in command of Capt. Saltonstall. She left New York in April of this year, and had been on the water but a few days when she fell in with two British armed vessels of no inconsiderable force. The Englishmen, confident of their ability to beat off the cruiser, made no effort to avoid a conflict. Capt. Saltonstall, by good seamanship, managed to put his vessel between the two hostile ships, and then worked both batteries with such vigor, that, after half-an-hour's fighting, the enemy was glad to strike. In this action the Americans lost seven men killed, and eight wounded. The loss of the enemy was not reported. This capture was of the greatest importance to the American cause, for the two prizes were loaded with military and naval stores.

During the year 1777, the occupation of Philadelphia by the British army, under Gen. Howe, led to some activity on the part of the American navy. While Philadelphia had been in the possession of the Continentals, it had been a favorite naval rendezvous. Into the broad channel of the Delaware the American cruisers had been accustomed to retreat when the British naval force along the coast became threateningly active. At the broad wharves of Philadelphia, the men-of-war laid up to have necessary repairs made. In the rope-walks of the town, the cordage for the gallant Yankee ships was spun. In the busy shipyards along the Delaware, many of the frigates, provided for by the Act of 1775, were built.

In the summer of 1777 all this was changed. Sir William Howe, at the head of an irresistible army, marched upon Philadelphia; and, defeating the American army at Brandywine, entered the city in triumph. The privateers and men-of-war scattered hastily, to avoid capture. Most of them fled down the Delaware; but a few, chiefly vessels still uncompleted, ascended the river.

To cut off these vessels, the British immediately commenced the erection of batteries to command the channel of the river, and prevent any communication between the American vessels above and below Philadelphia. To check the erection of these batteries, the American vessels "Delaware"

twenty-four, and "Andrea Doria" fourteen, together with one or two vessels flying the Pennsylvania flag, took up a position before the incomplete earthworks, and opened a heavy fire upon the soldiers employed in the trenches. So accurate was the aim of the American gunners, that work on the batteries was stopped. But, unluckily, the commander of the "Delaware," Capt. Alexander, had failed to reckon on the swift outflowing of the tide; and just as the sailors on that ship were becoming jubilant over the prospect of a victory, a mighty quiver throughout the ship told that she had been left on a shoal by the ebb tide. The enemy was not long in discovering the helpless condition of the "Delaware;" and field-pieces and siege-guns were brought down to the river-bank, until the luckless Americans saw themselves commanded by a heavy battery. In this unhappy predicament there was no course remaining but to strike their flag.

Though the British had possession of Philadelphia, and virtually controlled the navigation of the river at that point, the Americans still held powerful positions at Red Bank and at Fort Mifflin, lower down the river. Against the former post the British sent an unsuccessful land expedition of Hessians, but against Fort Mifflin a naval expedition was despatched.

Fort Mifflin was built on a low marshy island near the mouth of the Schuylkill. Its very situation, surrounded as it was by mud and water, made it impregnable to any land attack. While the fort itself was a fairly strong earthwork, laid out upon approved principles of engineering, its outer works of defence added greatly to its strength. In the main channels of the river were sunk heavy, sharp-pointed *chevaux de frise*, or submarine palisades, with sharp points extending just above the surface of the water. In addition to this obstacle, the enemy advancing by water upon the fort would have to meet the American flotilla, which, though composed of small craft only, was large enough to prove very annoying to an enemy. In this flotilla were thirteen galleys, one carrying a thirty-two pounder, and the rest with varying weight of ordnance; twenty-six half-galleys, each carrying a four-pounder; two xebecs, each with two twenty-four-pounders in the bow, two eighteen-pounders in the stern, and four nine-pounders in the waist; two floating batteries, fourteen fire-ships, one schooner-galley, one brig-galley, one provincial ship, and the brig "Andrea Doria." It was no

small naval force that the British had to overcome before attacking the mud ramparts and bastions of Fort Mifflin.

Against this armament the British brought a number of vessels, with the "Augusta," sixty-four, in the lead. The battle was begun late in the afternoon of the 22d of October, 1777. The attack of the Hessians upon the American fortifications at Red Bank, and the opening of the action between the British and American fleets, were simultaneous. The Hessians were beaten back with heavy loss, some of the American vessels opening fire upon them from the river. The naval battle lasted but a short time that night, owing to the darkness. When the battle ended for the night, the "Augusta," and the "Merlin," sloop-of-war, were left hard and fast aground.

The next morning the British advanced again to the attack. The skirmish of the night before had shown them that the Yankee flotilla was no mean adversary; and they now brought up re-inforcements, in the shape of the "Roebuck" forty-four, "Isis" thirty-two, "Pearl" thirty-two, and "Liverpool" twenty-eight. No sooner had the British squadron come within range than a heavy fire was opened upon the fort. The American flotilla was prompt to answer the challenge, and soon the action became general. Time and time again the Americans sent huge fire-ships, their well-tarred spars and rigging blazing fiercely, down among the enemy. But the skill and activity of the British sailors warded off this danger. Thereupon the Americans, seeing that they could not rely upon their fire-ships, changed their plan of action. Any one of the British vessels was more than a match for the largest American craft, so the Yankees saw they must rely upon force of numbers. Accordingly their larger vessels were each assigned to attack one of the enemy; while the swift-sailing galleys plied to and fro in the battle, lending aid where needed, and striking a blow wherever the opportunity offered itself. This course of action soon began to tell upon the British. All of their vessels began to show the effects of the American fire. The "Augusta" was in flames, owing to some pressed hay that had been packed upon her quarter having been set on fire. Despite the efforts of her crew, the flames spread rapidly. Seeing no chance to save the vessel, the crew abandoned her, and sought to gain the protection of other vessels of the British fleet. But the other ships, seeing the flames on the

"Augusta" drawing closer and closer to the magazine, and knowing that her explosion in that narrow and crowded channel would work dreadful damage among them, determined to abandon the attack upon Fort Mifflin, and withdrew. The "Merlin," which was hard and fast aground, was fired, and the British fled. As they turned their ships' prows down the Delaware, the dull sullen roar of an explosion told that the "Augusta" had met her end. Soon after the "Merlin" blew up, and the defeat of the British was complete.

But, though worsted in this attack upon Fort Mifflin, the British did not wholly abandon their designs upon it. Immediately upon their repulse, they began their preparations for a second attack. This time they did not propose to rely upon men-of-war alone. Batteries were built upon every point of land within range of Fort Mifflin. Floating batteries were built, and towed into position. By the 10th of November all was ready, and upon that day a tremendous cannonade was opened upon the American works. After two days of ceaseless bombardment, the garrison of the fort was forced to surrender. Since the fall of Fort Mifflin gave the control of the Delaware to the British, the Americans immediately put the torch to the "Andrea Doria" fourteen, the "Wasp" eight, and the "Hornet" ten; while the galleys skulked away along the Jersey coast, in search of places of retreat.

While the Yankee tars on river and harbor duty were thus getting their share of fighting, there was plenty of daring work being done on the high seas. One of the most important cruises of the year was that of the "Raleigh" and the "Alfred." The "Raleigh" was one of the twelve-pounder frigates built under the naval Act of 1775. With her consort the "Alfred," she left the American coast in the summer of 1777, bound for France, in search of naval stores that were there awaiting transportation to the United States. Both vessels were short-handed.

On the 2d of September the two vessels overhauled and captured the snow "Nancy," from England, bound for the West Indies. Her captain reported that he had sailed from the West Indies with a fleet of sixty merchantmen, under the convoy of four small men-of-war, the "Camel," the "Druid," the "Weasel," and the "Grasshopper." The poor sailing qualities of the "Nancy" had forced her to drop behind, and the fleet was then about a day in advance of her.

Crowding on all canvas, the two American ships set out in hot pursuit. From the captain of the "Nancy" Capt. Thompson of the "Raleigh" had obtained all the signals in use in the fleet of Indiamen. The next morning the fleet was made out; and the "Raleigh" and the "Alfred" exchanged signals, as though they were part of the convoy. They hung about the outskirts of the fleet until dark, planning, when the night should fall, to make a dash into the enemy's midst, and cut out the chief armed vessel.

But at nightfall the wind changed, so that the plan of the Americans was defeated. At daylight, however, the wind veered round and freshened, so that the "Raleigh," crowding on more sail, was soon in the very centre of the enemy's fleet. The "Alfred," unfortunately, being unable to carry so great a spread of canvas, was left behind; and the "Raleigh" remained to carry out alone her daring adventure.

The "Raleigh" boldly steered straight into the midst of the British merchantmen, exchanging signals with some, and hailing others. Her ports were lowered, and her guns on deck housed, so that there appeared about her nothing to indicate her true character. Having cruised about amid the merchantmen, she drew up alongside the nearest man-of-war, and when within pistol-shot, suddenly ran up her flag, threw open her ports, and commanded the enemy to strike.

All was confusion on board the British vessel. Her officers had never for a moment suspected the "Raleigh" of being other than one of their own fleet. While they stood aghast, not even keeping the vessel on her course, the "Raleigh" poured in a broadside. The British responded faintly with a few guns. Deliberately the Americans let fly another broadside, which did great execution. The enemy were driven from their guns, but doggedly refused to strike, holding out, doubtless, in the hope that the cannonade might draw to their assistance some of the other armed ships accompanying the fleet.

While the unequal combat was raging, a heavy squall came rushing over the water. The driving sheets of rain shut in the combatants, and only by the thunders of the cannonade could the other vessels tell that a battle was being fought in their midst.

When the squall had passed by, the affrighted merchantmen were seen scudding in every direction, like a school of flying-fish into whose midst

some rapacious shark or dolphin has intruded himself. But the three men-of-war, with several armed West-Indiamen in their wake, were fast bearing down upon the combatants, with the obvious intention of rescuing their comrade, and punishing the audacious Yankee.

The odds against Thompson were too great; and after staying by his adversary until the last possible moment, and pouring broadside after broadside into her, he abandoned the fight and rejoined the "Alfred." The two ships hung on the flanks of the fleet for some days, in the hopes of enticing two of the men-of-war out to join in battle. But all was to no avail, and the Americans were forced to content themselves with the scant glory won in the incomplete action of the "Raleigh." Her adversary proved to be the "Druid," twenty, which suffered severely from the "Raleigh's" repeated broadsides, having six killed, and twenty-six wounded; of the wounded, five died immediately after the battle.

It was during the year 1777 that occurred the first attempt to use gunpowder in the shape of a submarine torpedo. This device, which to-day threatens to overturn all established ideas of naval organization and architecture, originated with a clever Connecticut mechanic named David Bushnell. His invention covered not only submarine torpedoes, to be launched against a vessel, but a submarine boat in which an adventurous navigator might undertake to go beneath the hull of a man-of-war, and affix the torpedoes, so that failure should be impossible. This boat in shape was not unlike a turtle. A system of valves, air-pumps, and ballast enabled the operator to ascend or descend in the water at will. A screw-propeller afforded means of propulsion, and phosphorescent gauges and compasses enabled him to steer with some accuracy.

Preliminary tests made with this craft were uniformly successful. After a skilled operator had been obtained, the boat perfectly discharged the duties required of her. But, as is so often the case, when the time for action came she proved inadequate to the emergency. Let her inventor tell the story in his own words:—

"After various attempts to find an operator to my wish, I sent one, who appeared to be more expert than the rest, from New York, to a fifty-gun ship, lying not far from Governor's Island. He went under the ship, and attempted to fix the wooden screw to her bottom, but struck, as he supposes, a bar of iron, which passes from the rudder hinge, and is spiked under the ship's quarter. Had he moved a few inches, which

he might have done without rowing, I have no doubt he would have found wood where he might have fixed the screw; or, if the ship were sheathed with copper, he might easily have pierced it. But not being well skilled in the management of the vessel, in attempting to move to another place, he lost the ship. After seeking her in vain for some time, he rowed some distance, and rose to the surface of the water, but found daylight had advanced so far that he durst not renew the attempt. He says that he could easily have fastened the magazine under the stern of the ship above water, as he rowed up to the stern and touched it before he descended. Had he fastened it there, the explosion of a hundred and fifty pounds of powder (the quantity contained in the magazine) must have been fatal to the ship. In his return from the ship to New York, he passed near Governor's Island, and thought he was discovered by the enemy on the island. Being in haste to avoid the danger he feared, he cast off the magazine, as he imagined it retarded him in the swell, which was very considerable. After the magazine had been cast off one hour, the time the internal apparatus was set to run, it blew up with great violence.

"Afterwards there were two attempts made in Hudson's River, above the city; but they effected nothing. One of them was by the aforementioned person. In going toward the ship, he lost sight of her, and went a great distance beyond her. When he at length found her, the tide ran so strong, that, as he descended under water, for the ship's bottom, it swept him away. Soon after this, the enemy went up the river, and pursued the boat which had the submarine vessel on board, and sunk it with their shot."

So it appears, that, so far as this submarine vessel was concerned, Bushnell's great invention came to naught. And, indeed, it was but the first of a long line of experiments which have been terribly costly in human life, and which as yet have not been brought to a successful end In every war there comes forward the inventor with the submarine boat, and he always finds a few brave men ready to risk their lives in the floating coffin. Somewhere in Charleston Harbor to-day lies a submarine boat, enclosing the skeletons of eight men, who went out in it to break the blockade of the port during the civil war. And although there are to-day several types of submarine boat, each of which is claimed to make practicable the navigation of the ocean's depths, yet

it is doubtful whether any of them are much safer than Bushnell's primitive "turtle."

But Bushnell's experiments in torpedo warfare were not confined to attempts to destroy hostile vessels by means of his submarine vessel. He made several attacks upon the enemy by means of automatic torpedoes, none of which met with complete success. One of these attacks, made at Philadelphia in December, 1777, furnished the incident upon which is founded the well-known ballad of the "Battle of the Kegs."

It was at a time when the Delaware was filled with British shipping, that Bushnell set adrift upon its swift-flowing tide a number of small kegs, filled with gunpowder, and provided with percussion apparatus, so that contact with any object would explode them. The kegs were started on their voyage at night. But Bushnell had miscalculated the distance they had to travel; so that, instead of reaching the British fleet under cover of darkness, they arrived early in the morning. Great was the wonder of the British sentries, on ship and shore, to see the broad bosom of the river dotted with floating kegs. As the author of the satirical ballad describes it, —

"'Twas early day, as poets say,
Just as the sun was rising;
A soldier stood on a log of wood
And saw the sun a-rising.

As in amaze he stood to gaze
(The truth can't be denied, sir),
He spied a score of kegs, or more,
Come floating down the tide, sir.

A sailor, too, in jerkin blue,
The strange appearance viewing,
First d——d his eyes in great surprise,
Then said, 'Some mischief's brewing.'

These kegs, I'm told, the rebels hold,
Packed up like pickled herring;
And they've come down to attack the town
In this new way of ferrying."

The curiosity of the British at this inexplicable spectacle gave place to alarm, when one of the kegs, being picked up, blew up a boat, and seriously injured the man whose curiosity had led him to examine it too closely. Half panic-stricken, the British got out their guns, great and small; and all day every small object on the Delaware was the target for a lively fusillade.

"The cannons roar from shore to shore,
The small arms loud did rattle.
Since wars began, I'm sure no man
E'er saw so strange a battle.

The fish below swam to and fro,
Attacked from every quarter.
'Why sure' (thought they), 'the devil's to pay,
'Mong folk above the water.'"

But in the end the kegs all floated by the city, and only the ammunition stores of the British suffered from the attack.

Another attempt was made by Bushnell to destroy the British frigate "Cerberus," lying at anchor off the Connecticut coast. A torpedo, with the usual percussion apparatus, was drawn along the side of the frigate by a long line, but fouled with a schooner lying astern. The explosion occurred with frightful force, and the schooner was wholly demolished. Three men who were on board of her were blown to pieces; and a fourth was thrown high into the air, and was picked out of the water in an almost dying condition.

These experiments of the Connecticut mechanic in the Revolutionary war were the forerunner of a movement which took almost a hundred years to become generally accepted. We have been accustomed to say that Ericsson's armor-clad monitor revolutionized naval warfare; but the perfection of the torpedo is forcing the armor-clad ships into disuse, as they in their day thrust aside the old wooden frigates. The wise nation to-day, seeing how irresistible is the power of the torpedo, is abandoning the construction of cumbrous iron-clads, and building light, swift cruisers, that by speed and easy steering can avoid the submarine enemy. And if the torpedo cannot be said to be the ideal weapon of

chivalric warfare, it may at least in time be credited with doing away with the custom of cooping men up in wrought-iron boxes, to fight with machine guns. Farragut, who hated iron-clads, liked torpedoes little better; but had he foreseen their effects upon naval tactics, he might have hailed them as the destroyers of the iron-clad ships.

## CHAPTER XII.

NAVAL EVENTS OF 1778. — RECRUITING FOR THE NAVY. — THE DESCENT UPON NEW PROVIDENCE. — OPERATIONS ON THE DELAWARE. — CAPT. BARRY'S EXPLOITS. — DESTRUCTION OF THE AMERICAN FRIGATES. — AMERICAN REVERSES. — THE CAPTURE OF THE "PIGOT." — FRENCH NAVAL EXPLOITS.

THE year 1778 opened with the brightest prospects for the American cause. The notable success of the American arms on land, and particularly the surrender of Burgoyne, had favorably disposed France toward an alliance with the United States; and, in fact, this alliance was soon formed. Furthermore, the evidence of the prowess of the Americans on shore had stirred up the naval authorities to vigorous action, and it was determined to make the year 1778 a notable one upon the ocean.

Much difficulty was found, at the very outset, in getting men to ship for service on the regular cruisers. Privateers were being fitted out in every port; and on them the life was easy, discipline slack, danger to life small, and the prospects for financial reward far greater than on the United States men-of-war. Accordingly, the seafaring men as a rule

preferred to ship on the privateers. At no time in the history of the United States has the barbaric British custom of getting sailors for the navy by means of the "press-gang" been followed. American blue-jackets have never been impressed by force. It is unfortunately true that unfair advantages have been taken of their simplicity, and sometimes they have even been shipped while under the influence of liquor; but such cases have been rare. It is safe to say that few men have ever trod the deck of a United States man-of-war, as members of the crew, without being there of their own free will and accord.

But in 1777 it was sometimes hard to fill the ships' rosters. Then the ingenuity of the recruiting officers was called into play. A sailor who served on the "Protector" during the Revolution thus tells the story of his enlistment: —

"All means were resorted to which ingenuity could devise to induce men to enlist. A recruiting officer, bearing a flag, and attended by a band of martial music, paraded the streets, to excite a thirst for glory and a spirit of military ambition. The recruiting officer possessed the qualifications necessary to make the service appear alluring, especially to the young. He was a jovial, good-natured fellow, of ready wit and much broad humor. When he espied any large boys among the idle crowd around him, he would attract their attention by singing in a comical manner the following doggerel, —

'All you that have bad masters,
And cannot get your due,
Come, come, my brave boys,
And join our ship's crew.'

"A shout and a huzza would follow, and some would join in the ranks. My excitable feelings were aroused. I repaired to the rendezvous, signed the ship's papers, mounted a cockade, and was, in my own estimation, already more than half a sailor. Appeals continued to be made to the patriotism of every young man, to lend his aid, by his exertions on sea or land, to free his country from the common enemy About the last of February the ship was ready to receive her crew, and was hauled off into the channel, that the sailors might have no opportunity to run away after they were got on board. Upward of three

hundred and thirty men were carried, dragged, and driven on board, of all kinds, ages, and descriptions, in all the various stages of intoxication, from that of sober tipsiness to beastly drunkenness, with an uproar and clamor that may be more easily imagined than described."

But, whatever the methods adopted to secure recruits for the navy, the men thus obtained did admirable service; and in no year did they win more glory than in 1778.

As usual the year's operations were opened by an exploit of one of the smaller cruisers. This was the United States sloop-of-war "Providence," a trig little vessel, mounting only twelve four-pounders, and carrying a crew of but fifty men. But she was in command of a daring seaman Capt. Rathburne, and she opened the year's hostilities with an exploit worthy of Paul Jones.

Off the south-eastern coast of Florida, in that archipelago or collection of groups of islands known collectively as the West Indies, lies the small island of New Providence. Here in 1778 was a small British colony. The well-protected harbor, and the convenient location of the island, made it a favorite place for the rendezvous of British naval vessels. Indeed, it bid fair to become, what Nassau is to-day, the chief British naval station on the American coast. In 1778 the little seaport had a population of about one thousand people.

With his little vessel, and her puny battery of four-pounders, Capt. Rathburne determined to undertake the capture of New Providence. Only the highest daring, approaching even recklessness, could have conceived such a plan. The harbor was defended by a fort of no mean power. There was always one British armed vessel, and often more, lying at anchor under the guns of the fort. Two hundred of the people of the town were able-bodied men, able to bear arms. How, then, were the Yankees, with their puny force, to hope for success? This query Rathburne answered, "By dash and daring."

It was about eleven o'clock on the night of the 27th of January, 1778, that the "Providence" cast anchor in a sheltered cove near the entrance to the harbor of New Providence. Twenty-five of her crew were put ashore, and being re-enforced by a few American prisoners kept upon the island, made a descent upon Fort Nassau from its landward side. The sentries dozing at their posts were easily overpowered.

and the garrison was aroused from its peaceful slumbers by the cheers of the Yankee blue-jackets as they came tumbling in over the ramparts. A rocket sent up from the fort announced the victory to the "Providence," and she came in and cast anchor near the fort.

When morning broke, the Americans saw a large sixteen-gun ship lying at anchor in the harbor, together with five sail that looked suspiciously like captured American merchantmen. The proceedings of the night had been quietly carried on, and the crew of the armed vessel had no reason to suspect that the condition of affairs on shore had been changed in any way during the night. But at daybreak a boat carrying four men put off from the shore, and made for the armed ship; and at the same time a flag was flung out from the flag-staff of the fort, — not the familiar scarlet flag of Great Britain, but the almost unknown stars and stripes of the United States.

The sleepy sailors on the armed vessel rubbed their eyes; and while they were staring at the strange piece of bunting, there came a hail from a boat alongside, and an American officer clambered over the rail. He curtly told the captain of the privateer that the fort was in the hands of the Americans, and called upon him to surrender his vessel forthwith. Resistance was useless; for the heavy guns of Fort Nassau were trained upon the British ship, and could blow her out of the water. The visitor's arguments proved to be unanswerable; and the captain of the privateer surrendered his vessel, which was taken possession of by the Americans; while her crew of forty-five men was ordered into confinement in the dungeons of the fort which had so lately held captive Americans. Other boarding parties were then sent to the other vessels in the harbor, which proved to be American craft, captured by the British sloop-of-war "Grayton."

At sunrise the sleeping town showed signs of reviving life, and a party of the audacious Yankees marched down to the house of the governor. That functionary was found in bed, and in profound ignorance of the events of the night. The Americans broke the news to him none too gently, and demanded the keys of a disused fortress on the opposite side of the harbor from Fort Nassau. For a time the governor was inclined to demur; but the determined attitude of the Americans soon persuaded him that he was a prisoner, though in his own house, and he delivered the keys. Thereupon the Americans marched through the streets

of the city, around the harbor's edge to the fort, spiked the guns, and carrying with them the powder and small-arms, marched back to Fort Nassau.

But by this time it was ten o'clock, and the whole town was aroused. The streets were crowded with people eagerly discussing the invasion. The timid ones were busily packing up their goods to fly into the country; while the braver ones were hunting for weapons, and organizing for an attack upon the fort held by the Americans. Fearing an outbreak, Capt. Rathburne sent out a flag of truce, making proclamation to all the inhabitants of New Providence, that the Americans would do no damage to the persons or property of the people of the island unless compelled so to do in self-defence. This pacified the more temperate of the inhabitants; but the hotheads, to the number of about two hundred, assembled before Fort Nassau, and threatened to attack it. But, when they summoned Rathburne to surrender, that officer leaped upon the parapet, and coolly told the assailants to come on.

"We can beat you back easily," said he. "And, by the Eternal, if you fire a gun at us, we'll turn the guns of the fort on your town, and lay it in ruins."

This bold defiance disconcerted the enemy; and, after some consultation among themselves, they dispersed.

About noon that day, the British sloop-of-war "Grayton" made her appearance, and stood boldly into the harbor where lay the "Providence." The United States colors were quickly hauled down from the fort flagstaff, and every means was taken to conceal the true state of affairs from the enemy. But the inhabitants along the waterside, by means of constant signalling and shouting, at last aroused the suspicion of her officers; and she hastily put about, and scudded for the open sea. The guns at Fort Nassau opened on her as she passed, and the aim of the Yankee gunners was accurate enough to make the splinters fly. The exact damage done her has, however, never been ascertained.

All that night the daring band of blue-jackets held the fort unmolested. But on the following morning the townspeople again plucked up courage, and to the number of five hundred marched to the fort, and placing several pieces of artillery in battery, summoned the garrison to surrender. The flag of truce that bore the summons carried also the

threat, that, unless the Americans laid down their arms without resistance, the fort would be stormed, and all therein put to the sword without mercy.

For answer to the summons, the Americans nailed their colors to the mast, and swore that while a man of them lived the fort should not be surrendered. By this bold defiance they so awed the enemy that the day passed without the expected assault; and at night the besiegers returned to their homes, without having fired a shot.

All that night the Americans worked busily, transferring to the "Providence" all the ammunition and stores in the fort; and the next morning the prizes were manned, the guns of the fort spiked, and the adventurous Yankees set sail in triumph. For three days they had held possession of the island, though outnumbered tenfold by the inhabitants; they had captured large quantities of ammunition and naval stores; they had freed their captured countrymen; they had retaken from the British five captured American vessels, and in the whole affair they had lost not a single man. It was an achievement of which a force of triple the number might have been proud.

In February, 1778, the Delaware, along the water-front of Philadelphia, was the scene of some dashing work by American sailors, under the command of Capt. John Barry. This officer was in command of the "Effingham," one of the vessels which had been trapped in the Delaware by the unexpected occupation of Philadelphia by the British. The inactivity of the vessels, which had taken refuge at Whitehall, was a sore disappointment to Barry, who longed for the excitement and dangers of actual battle. With the British in force at Philadelphia, it was madness to think of taking the frigates down the stream. But Barry rightly thought that what could not be done with a heavy ship might be done with a few light boats.

Philadelphia was then crowded with British troops. The soldiers were well provided with money, and, finding themselves quartered in a city for the winter, led a life of continual gayety. The great accession to the population of the town made it necessary to draw upon the country far and near for provisions; and boats were continually plying upon the Delaware, carrying provisions to the city. To intercept some of these boats, and to give the merry British officers a taste of starvation, was Barry's plan.

Accordingly four boats were manned with well-armed crews, and with muffled oars set out on a dark night to patrol the river. Philadelphia was reached, and the expedition was almost past the city, when the sentries on one of the British men-of-war gave the alarm. A few scattering shots were fired from the shore; but the jackies bent to their oars, and the boats were soon lost to sight in the darkness. When day broke, Barry was far down the river.

Opposite the little post held by the American army, and called Fort Penn, Barry spied a large schooner, mounting ten guns, and flying the British flag. With her were four transport ships, loaded with forage for the enemy's forces. Though the sun had risen, and it was broad day, Barry succeeded in running his boats alongside the schooner; and before the British suspected the presence of any enemy, the blue-jackets were clambering over the rail, cutlass and pistol in hand. There was no resistance. The astonished Englishmen threw down their arms, and rushed below. The victorious Americans battened down the hatches, ordered the four transports to surrender, on pain of being fired into, and triumphantly carried all five prizes to the piers of Fort Penn. There the hatches were removed; and, the Yankee sailors being drawn up in line, Barry ordered the prisoners to come on deck. When all appeared, it was found that the Yankees had bagged one major, two captains, three lieutenants, ten soldiers, and about a hundred sailors and marines, — a very respectable haul for a party of not more than thirty American sailors.

The next day a British frigate and sloop-of-war appeared down the bay. They were under full sail, and were apparently making for Fort Penn, with the probable intention of recapturing Barry's prizes. Fearing that he might be robbed of the fruits of his victory, Barry put the four transports in charge of Capt. Middleton, with instructions to fire them should the enemy attempt to cut them out. In the mean time, he took the ten-gun schooner, and made for the Christiana River, in the hopes of taking her into shallow waters, whither the heavier British vessels could not follow. But, unluckily for his plans, the wind favored the frigate; and she gained upon him so rapidly, that only by the greatest expedition could he run his craft ashore and escape. Two of the guns were pointed down the main hatch, and a few rounds of round-shot were

fired through the schooner's bottom. She sunk quickly; and the Americans pushed off from her side, just as the British frigate swung into position, and let fly her broadside at her escaping foes.

The schooner being thus disposed of, the British turned their attention to the four captured transports at Fort Penn. Capt. Middleton and Capt. McLane, who commanded the American militia on shore, had taken advantage of the delay to build a battery of bales of hay near the piers. The British sloop-of-war opened the attack, but the sharp-shooters in the battery and on the transports gave her so warm a reception that she retired. She soon returned to the attack, but was checked by the American fire, and might have been beaten off, had not Middleton received a mortal wound while standing on the battery and cheering on his men. Dismayed by the fall of their leader, the Americans set fire to the transport and fled to the woods, leaving the British masters of the field.

Barry's conduct in this enterprise won for him the admiration of friend and foe alike. Sir William Howe, then commander-in-chief of the British forces in America, offered the daring American twenty thousand guineas and the command of a British frigate, if he would desert the service of the United States.

"Not the value and command of the whole British fleet," wrote Barry in reply, "can seduce me from the cause of my country."

After this adventure, Barry and his followers made their way through the woods back to Whitehall, where his ship the "Effingham" was lying at anchor. Here he passed the winter in inactivity. At Whitehall, and near that place, were nearly a dozen armed ships, frigates, sloops, and privateers. All had fled thither for safety when the British took possession of Philadelphia, and now found themselves caught in a trap. To run the blockade of British batteries and men-of-war at Philadelphia, was impossible; and there was nothing to do but wait until the enemy should evacuate the city.

But the British were in no haste to leave Philadelphia; and when they did get ready to leave, they determined to destroy the American flotilla before departing. Accordingly on the 4th of May, 1778, the water-front of the Quaker City was alive with soldiers and citizens watching the embarkation of the troops ordered against the American forces at Whitehall. On the placid bosom of the Delaware floated the

schooners "Viper" and "Pembroke," the galleys "Hussar," "Cornwallis," "Ferret," and "Philadelphia," four gunboats, and eighteen flat-boats. Between this fleet and the shore, boats were busily plying, carrying off the soldiers of the light infantry, seven hundred of whom were detailed for the expedition. It was a holiday affair. The British expected little fighting; and with flags flying, and bands playing, the vessels started up stream, the cheers of the soldiers on board mingling with those on the shore.

Bristol, the landing-place chosen, was soon reached; and the troops disembarked without meeting with any opposition. Forming in solid column, the soldiers took up the march for Whitehall; but, when within five miles of that place, a ruddy glare in the sky told that the Americans had been warned of their coming, and had set the torch to the shipping. When the head of the British column entered Whitehall, the two new American frigates "Washington" and "Effingham" were wrapped in flames. Both were new vessels, and neither had yet taken on board her battery. Several other vessels were lying at the wharves; and to these the British set the torch, and continued their march, leaving the roaring flames behind them. A little farther up the Delaware, at the point known as Crosswise Creek, the large privateer "Sturdy Beggar" was found, together with several smaller craft. The crews had all fled, and the deserted vessels met the fate of the other craft taken by the invaders. Then the British turned their steps homeward, and reached Philadelphia, after having burned almost a score of vessels, and fired not a single shot.

On the high seas during 1778 occurred several notable naval engagements. Of the more important of these we have spoken in our accounts of the exploits of Tucker, Biddle, and Paul Jones. The less important ones must be dismissed with a hasty word.

It may be said, that, in general, the naval actions of 1778 went against the Americans. In February of that year the "Alfred" was captured by a British frigate, and the "Raleigh" narrowly escaped. In March, the new frigate "Virginia," while beating out of Chesapeake Bay on her very first cruise, ran aground, and was captured by the enemy. In September, the United States frigate "Raleigh," when a few days out from Boston, fell in with two British vessels, — one a frigate, and the other

a ship-of-the-line. Capt. Barry, whose daring exploits on the Delaware we have chronicled, was in command of the "Raleigh," and gallantly gave battle to the frigate, which was in the lead. Between these two vessels the conflict raged with great fury for upwards of two hours, when the fore-topmast and mizzen top-gallant-mast of the American having been shot away Barry attempted to close the conflict by boarding. The enemy kept at a safe distance, however; and his consort soon coming up, the Americans determined to seek safety in flight. The enemy pursued, keeping up a rapid fire; and the running conflict continued until midnight. Finally Barry set fire to his ship, and with the greater part of his crew escaped to the nearest land, an island near the mouth of the Penobscot. The British immediately boarded the abandoned ship, extinguished the flames, and carried their prize away in triumph.

To offset these reverses to the American arms, there were one or two victories for the Americans, aside from those won by Paul Jones, and the exploits of privateers and colonial armed vessels, which we shall group together in a later chapter. The first of these victories was won by an army officer, who was later transferred to the navy, and won great honor in the naval service.

In an inlet of Narragansett Bay, near Newport, the British had anchored a powerful floating battery, made of the dismasted hulk of the schooner "Pigot," on which were mounted twelve eight-pounders and ten swivel guns. It was about the time that the fleet sent by France to aid the United States was expected to arrive; and the British had built and placed in position this battery, to close the channel leading to Newport. Major Silas Talbot, an army officer who had won renown earlier in the war by a daring but unsuccessful attempt to destroy two British frigates in the Hudson River, by means of fire-ships, obtained permission to lead an expedition for the capture of the "Pigot." Accordingly, with sixty picked men, he set sail from Providence in the sloop "Hawk," mounting three three-pounders. When within a few miles of the "Pigot," he landed, and, borrowing a horse, rode down and reconnoitred the battery. When the night set in, he returned to the sloop, and at once weighed anchor and made for the enemy. As the "Hawk" drew near the "Pigot," the British sentinels challenged her, and receiving no reply, fired a volley of musketry, which injured no one. On came the "Hawk," under a

full spread of canvas. A kedge-anchor had been lashed to the end of her bowsprit; and, before the British could reload, this crashed through the boarding-nettings of the "Pigot," and caught in the shrouds. The two vessels being fast, the Americans, with ringing cheers, ran along the bowsprit, and dropped on the deck of the "Pigot." The surprise was complete. The British captain rushed on deck, clad only in his shirt and drawers, and strove manfully to rally his crew. But as the Americans, cutlass and pistol in hand, swarmed over the taffrail, the surprised British lost heart, and fled to the hold, until at last the captain found himself alone upon the deck. Nothing was left for him but to surrender with the best grace possible; and soon Talbot was on his way back to Providence, with his prize and a shipful of prisoners.

But perhaps the greatest naval event of 1778 in American waters was the arrival of the fleet sent by France to co-operate with the American forces. Not that any thing of importance was ever accomplished by this naval force: the French officers seemed to find their greatest satisfaction in manœuvring, reconnoitring, and performing in the most exact and admirable manner all the preliminaries to a battle. Having done this, they would sail away, never firing a gun. The Yankees were prone to disregard the nice points of naval tactics. Their plan was to lay their ships alongside the enemy, and pound away until one side or the other had to yield or sink. But the French allies were strong on tactics, and somewhat weak in dash; and, as a result, there is not one actual combat in which they figured to be recorded.

It was a noble fleet that France sent to the aid of the struggling Americans, — twelve ships-of-the-line and three frigates. What dashing Paul Jones would have done, had he ever enjoyed the command of such a fleet, almost passes imagination. Certain it is that he would have wasted little time in formal evolutions. But the fleet was commanded by Count d'Estaing, a French naval officer of honorable reputation. What he accomplished during his first year's cruise in American waters, can be told in a few words. His intention was to trap Lord Howe's fleet in the Delaware, but he arrived too late. He then followed the British to New York, but was baffled there by the fact that his vessels were too heavy to cross the bar. Thence he went to Newport, where the appearance of his fleet frightened the British into burning four of their

frigates, and sinking two sloops-of-war. Lord Howe, hearing of this, plucked up courage, and, gathering together all his ships, sailed from New York to Newport, to give battle to the French. The two fleets were about equally matched. On the 10th of August the enemies met in the open sea, off Newport. For two days they kept out of range of each other, manœuvring for the weather-gage; that is, the French fleet, being to windward of the British, strove to keep that position, while the British endeavored to take it from them. The third day a gale arose; and when it subsided the ships were so crippled, that, after exchanging a few harmless broadsides at long range, they withdrew, and the naval battle was ended.

Such was the record of D'Estaing's magnificent fleet during 1778. Certainly the Americans had little to learn from the representatives of the power that had for years contended with England for the mastery of the seas.

## CHAPTER XIII.

LAST YEARS OF THE WAR. — DISASTROUS EXPEDITION TO THE PENOBSCOT. — WHOLESALE CAPTURES ON THE NEWFOUNDLAND BANKS. — FRENCH SHIPS IN AMERICAN WATERS. — TAKING OF CHARLESTON. — THE "TRUMBULL'S" VICTORY AND DEFEAT. — CAPT. BARRY AND THE "ALLIANCE." — CLOSE OF THE WAR.

THE year 1779 is chiefly known in American naval history as the year in which Paul Jones did his most brilliant service in the "Bon Homme Richard." The glory won by the Americans was chiefly gained in European waters. Along the coast of the United States, there were some dashing actions; but the advantage generally remained with the British.

Perhaps the most notable naval event of this year, aside from the battle between the "Bon Homme Richard" and the "Serapis," was the expedition sent by the State of Massachusetts against the British post at Castine, on the banks of the Penobscot River. At this unimportant settlement in the wilds of Maine, the British had established a military post, with a garrison of about a thousand men, together with four armed vessels. Here they might have been permitted to remain in peace, so far as any danger from their presence was to be apprehended by the people of New England. But the sturdy citizens of Massachusetts had boasted, that, since the evacuation of Boston, no British soldier had dared to set foot on Massachusetts soil; and the news of this invasion caused the people of Boston to rise as one man, and demand that the invaders should be expelled.

Accordingly a joint naval and military expedition was fitted out under authority granted by the Legislature of the State. Congress detailed

he United States frigate "Warren," and the sloops-of-war "Diligence" and "Providence," to head the expedition. The Massachusetts cruisers "Hazard," "Active," and "Tyrannicide" represented the regular naval forces of the Bay State; and twelve armed vessels belonging to private citizens were hired, to complete the armada. The excitement among seafaring men ran high. Every man who had ever swung a cutlass or sighted a gun was anxious to accompany the expedition. Ordinarily it was difficult to ship enough men for the navy; now it was impossible to take all the applicants. It is even recorded that the list of common sailors on the armed ship "Vengeance" included thirty masters of merchantmen, who waived all considerations of rank, in order that they might join the expedition.

To co-operate with the fleet, a military force was thought necessary; and accordingly orders were issued for fifteen hundred of the militia of the district of Maine to assemble at Townsend. Brig.-Gen. Sullivan was appointed to the command of the land forces, while Capt. Saltonstall of the "Warren" was made commodore of the fleet.

Punctually on the day appointed the white sails of the American ships were seen by the militiamen at the appointed rendezvous. But when the ships dropped anchor, and the commodore went ashore to consult with the officers of the land forces, he found that but nine hundred of the militiamen had responded to the call. Nevertheless, it was determined, after a brief consultation, to proceed with the expedition, despite the sadly diminished strength of the militia battalions.

On the 23d of July, the fleet set sail from the harbor of Townsend. It was an extraordinary and impressive spectacle. The shores of the harbor were covered with unbroken forests, save at the lower end where a little hamlet of scarce five hundred people gave a touch of civilization to the wild scene. But the water looked as though the commerce of a dozen cities had centred there. On the placid bosom of the little bay floated forty-four vessels. The tread of men about the capstans, the hoarse shouts of command, the monotonous songs of the sailors, the creaking of cordage, and the flapping of sails gave an unwonted turbulence to the air which seldom bore a sound other than the voices of birds or the occasional blows of a woodman's axe. Nineteen vessels-of-war and twenty-five transports imparted to the harbor of Townsend an

air of life and bustle to which it had been a stranger, and which it has never since experienced.

The weather was clear, and the wind fair; so that two days after leaving Townsend the fleet appeared before the works of the enemy. Standing on the quarter-deck of the "Warren," the commodore and the general eagerly scanned the enemy's defences, and after a careful examination were forced to admit that the works they had to carry were no mean specimens of the art of fortification. The river's banks rose almost perpendicularly from the water-side, and on their crest were perched the enemy's batteries, while on a high and precipitous hill was built a fort or citadel. In the river were anchored the four armed vessels.

Two days were spent by the Americans in reconnoitring the enemy's works; and on the 28th of July the work of disembarking the troops began, under a heavy fire from the enemy's batteries. The "Warren" and one of the sloops-of-war endeavored to cover the landing party by attacking the batteries; and a spirited cannonade followed, in which the American flag-ship suffered seriously. At last all the militia, together with three hundred marines, were put on shore, and at once assaulted the batteries. They were opposed by about an equal number of well-drilled Scotch regulars, and the battle raged fiercely; the men-of-war in the river covering the advance of the troops by a spirited and well-directed fire. More than once the curving line of men rushed against the fiery front of the British ramparts, and recoiled, shattered by the deadly volleys of the Scotch veterans. Here and there, in the grass and weeds, the forms of dead men began to be seen. The pitiable spectacle of the wounded, painfully crawling to the rear, began to make the pulse of the bravest beat quicker. But the men of Massachusetts, responsive to the voices of their officers, re-formed their shattered ranks, and charged again and again, until at last, with a mighty cheer, they swept over the ramparts, driving the British out. Many of the enemy surrendered; more fled for shelter to the fort on the hill. The smoke and din of battle died away. There came a brief respite in the bloody strife. The Americans had won the first trick in the bloody game of war.

Only a short pause followed; then the Americans moved upon the fort. But here they found themselves overmatched. Against the tower-

ing bastions of the fortress they might hurl themselves in vain. The enemy, safe behind its heavy parapets, could mow down their advancing ranks with a cool and deliberate fire. The assailants had already sacrificed more than a hundred men. Was it wise now to order an assault that might lead to the loss of twice that number?

The hotheads cried out for the immediate storming of the fort; but cooler counsels prevailed, and a siege was decided upon. Trenches were dug, the guns in the outlying batteries were turned upon the fort, and the New Englanders sat down to wait until the enemy should be starved out, or until re-enforcements might be brought from Boston.

So for three weeks the combatants rested on their arms, glaring at each other over the tops of their breastworks, and now and then exchanging a shot or a casual volley, but doing little in the way of actual hostilities. Provisions were failing the British, and they began to feel that they were in a trap from which they could only emerge through a surrender, when suddenly the situation was changed, and the fortunes of war went against the Americans.

One morning the "Tyrannicide," which was stationed on the lookout down the bay, was seen beating up the river, under a full press of sail. Signals flying at her fore indicated that she had important news to tell. Her anchor had not touched the bottom before a boat pushed off from her side, and made straight for the commodore's flagship. Reaching the "Warren," a lieutenant clambered over the side, and saluted Commodore Saltonstall on the quarter-deck.

"Capt. Cathcart's compliments, sir," said he, "and five British men-of-war are just entering the bay. The first one appears to be the 'Rainbow,' forty-four."

Here was news indeed. Though superior in numbers, the Americans were far inferior in weight of metal. After a hasty consultation, it was determined to abandon the siege, and retreat with troops and vessels to the shallow waters of the Penobscot, whither the heavy men-of-war of the enemy would be unable to follow them. Accordingly the troops were hastily re-embarked, and a hurried flight began, which was greatly accelerated by the appearance of the enemy coming up the river.

The chase did not continue long before it became evident the enemy would overhaul the retreating ships. Soon he came within range, and

opened fire with his bow-guns, in the hopes of crippling one of the American ships. The fire was returned; and for several hours the wooded shores of the Penobscot echoed and re-echoed the thunders of the cannonade, as the warring fleets swept up the river.

At last the conviction forced itself on the minds of the Americans, that for them there was no escape. The British were steadily gaining upon them, and there was no sign of the shoal water in which they had hoped to find a refuge. It would seem that a bold dash might have carried the day for the Americans, so greatly did they outnumber their enemies. But this plan does not appear to have suggested itself to Capt. Saltonstall, who had concentrated all his efforts upon the attempt to escape. When escape proved to be hopeless, his only thought was to destroy his vessels. Accordingly his flagship, the "Warren," was run ashore, and set on fire. The action of the commodore was imitated by the rest of the officers, and soon the banks of the river were lined with blazing vessels. The "Hunter," the "Hampden," and one transport fell into the hands of the British. The rest of the forty-nine vessels — men of-war, privateers, and transports — that made up the fleet were destroyed by flames.

It must indeed have been a stirring spectacle. The shores of the Penobscot River were then a trackless wilderness; the placid bosom of the river itself had seldom been traversed by a heavier craft than the slender birch-bark canoe of the red man; yet here was this river crowded with shipping, the dark forests along its banks lighted up by the glare of twoscore angry fires. Through the thickets and underbrush parties of excited men broke their way, seeking for a common point of meeting, out of range of the cannon of the enemy. The British, meantime, were striving to extinguish the flames, but with little success; and before the day ended, little remained of the great Massachusetts flotilla, except the three captured ships and sundry heaps of smouldering timber.

The hardships of the soldiers and marines who had escaped capture, only to find themselves lost in the desolate forest, were of the severest kind. Separating into parties they plodded along, half-starved, with torn and rain-soaked clothing, until finally, footsore and almost perishing, they reached the border settlements, and were aided on their way to Boston. The disaster was complete, and for months its depressing effect upon American naval enterprise was observable.

In observing the course of naval events in 1779, it is noticeable that the most effective work was done by the cruisers sent out by the individual States, or by privateers. The United States navy, proper, did little except what was done in European waters by Paul Jones. Indeed, along the American coast, a few cruises in which no actions of moment occurred, although several prizes were taken, make up the record of naval activity for the year.

The first of these cruises was that made in April by the ships "Warren," "Queen of France," and "Ranger." They sailed from Boston, and were out but a few days when they captured a British privateer of fourteen guns. From one of the sailors on this craft it was learned that a large fleet of transports and storeships had just sailed from New York, bound for Georgia. Crowding on all sail, the Americans set out in pursuit, and off Cape Henry overhauled the chase. Two fleets were sighted, one to windward numbering nine sail, and one to leeward made up of ten sail. The pursuers chose the fleet to windward for their prey, and by sharp work succeeded in capturing seven vessels in eight hours. Two of the ships were armed cruisers of twenty-nine and sixteen guns respectively, and all the prizes were heavy laden with provisions, ammunition, and cavalry accoutrements. All were safely taken into port.

In June, another fleet of United States vessels left Boston in search of British game. The "Queen of France" and the "Ranger" were again employed; but the "Warren" remained in port, fitting out for her ill-fated expedition to the Penobscot. Her place was taken by the "Providence," thirty-two. For a time the cruisers fell in with nothing of importance. But one day about the middle of July, as the three vessels lay hove to off the banks of Newfoundland, in the region of perpetual fog, the dull booming of a signal gun was heard. Nothing was to be seen on any side. From the quarter-deck, and from the cross-trees alike, the eager eyes of the officers and seamen strove in vain to penetrate the dense curtain of gray fog that shut them in. But again the signal gun sounded, then another; and tone and direction alike told that the two reports had not come from the same cannon. Then a bell was heard telling the hour, — another, still another; then a whole chorus of bells. Clearly a large fleet was shut in the fog.

About eleven o'clock in the morning the fog lifted, and to their

intense surprise the crew of the "Queen of France" found themselves close alongside of a large merchant-ship. As the fog cleared away more completely, ships appeared on every side; and the astonished Yankees found themselves in the midst of a fleet of about one hundred and fifty sail under convoy of a British ship-of-the-line, and several frigates and sloops-of-war. Luckily the United States vessels had no colors flying, and nothing about them to betray their nationality: so Capt. Rathburn of the "Queen" determined to try a little masquerading.

Bearing down upon the nearest merchantman, he hailed her; and the following conversation ensued, —

"What fleet is this?"

"British merchantmen from Jamaica, bound for London. Who are you?"

"His Majesty's ship 'Arethusa,'" answered Rathburn boldly, "from Halifax on cruise. Have you seen any Yankee privateers?"

"Ay, ay, sir," was the response. "Several have been driven out of the fleet."

"Come aboard the 'Arethusa,' then. I wish to consult with you."

Soon a boat put off from the side of the merchantman, and a jolly British sea-captain confidently clambered to the deck of the "Queen." Great was his astonishment to be told that he was a prisoner, and to see his boat's crew brought aboard, and their places taken by American jackies. Back went the boat to the British ship; and soon the Americans were in control of the craft, without in the least alarming the other vessels, that lay almost within hail. The "Queen" then made up to another ship, and captured her in the same manner.

But at this juncture Commodore Whipple, in the "Providence," hailed the "Queen," and directed Rathburn to edge out of the fleet before the British men-of-war should discover his true character. Rathburn protested vigorously, pointing out the two vessels he had captured, and urging Whipple to follow his example, and capture as many vessels as he could in the same manner. Finally Whipple overcame his fears, and adopted Rathburn's methods, with such success that shortly after nightfall the Americans left the fleet, taking with them eleven rich prizes. Eight of these they succeeded in taking safe to Boston, where they were sold for more than a million dollars.

In May, 1779, occurred two unimportant engagements, — one off Sandy Hook, in which the United States sloop "Providence," ten guns, captured the British sloop "Diligent," after a brief but spirited engagement; the second action occurred off St. Kitt's, where the United States brig "Retaliation" successfully resisted a vigorous attack by a British cutter and a brig. The record of the regular navy for the year closed with the cruise of the United States frigates "Deane" and "Boston," that set sail from the Delaware late in the summer. They kept the seas for nearly three months, but made only a few bloodless captures.

The next year opened with a great disaster to the American cause. The Count d'Estaing, after aimlessly wandering up and down the coast of the United States with the fleet ostensibly sent to aid the Americans, suddenly took himself and his fleet off to the West Indies. Sir Henry Clinton soon learned of the departure of the French, and gathered an expedition for the capture of Charleston. On the 10th of February, Clinton with five thousand troops, and a British fleet under Admiral Arbuthnot, appeared off Edisto Inlet, about thirty miles from Charleston and began leisurely preparations for an attack upon the city. Had he pushed ahead and made his assault at once, he would have met but little resistance; but his delay of over a month gave the people of Charleston time to prepare for a spirited resistance.

The approach of the British fleet penned up in Charleston harbor several United States men-of-war and armed vessels, among them the "Providence," "Queen of France," "Boston," "Ranger," "Gen. Moultrie," and "Notre Dame." These vessels took an active part in the defence of the harbor against Arbuthnot's fleet, but were beaten back. The "Queen," the "Gen. Moultrie," and the "Notre Dame" were then sunk in the channel to obstruct the progress of the enemy; their guns being taken ashore, and mounted in the batteries on the sea-wall. Then followed days of terror for Charleston. The land forces of the enemy turned siege guns on the unhappy city, and a constant bombardment was kept up from the hostile fleet. Fort Sumter, the batteries along the water front, and the ships remaining to the Americans answered boldly. But the defence was hopeless. The city was hemmed in by an iron cordon. The hot-shot of the enemy's batteries were falling in the streets, and flames were breaking out in all parts of the town. While the defence

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SIEGE OF CHARLESTON, S. C., MAY, 1780

lasted, the men-of-war took an active part in it; and, indeed, the sailors were the last to consent to a surrender. So noticeable was the activity of the frigate "Boston" in particular, that, when it became evident that the Americans could hold out but a little longer, Admiral Arbuthnot sent her commander a special order to surrender.

"I do not think much of striking my flag to your present force," responded bluff Samuel Tucker, who commanded the "Boston;" "for I have struck more of your flags than are now flying in this harbor."

But, despite this bold defiance, the inevitable capitulation soon followed. Charleston fell into the hands of the British; and with the city went the three men-of-war, "Providence," "Boston," and "Ranger."

It will be noticed that this disaster was the direct result of the disappearance of Count d'Estaing and the French fleet. To the student of history who calmly considers the record of our French naval allies in the Revolution, there appears good reason to believe that their presence did us more harm than good. Under De Grasse, the French fleet did good service in co-operation with the allied armies in the Yorktown campaign; but, with this single exception, no instance can be cited of any material aid rendered by it to the American cause. The United States navy, indeed, suffered on account of the French alliance; for despite the loss of many vessels in 1779 and 1780, Congress refused to increase the navy in any way, trusting to France to care for America's interests on the seas. The result of this policy was a notable falling-off in the number and spirit of naval actions.

The ship "Trumbull," twenty-eight, one of the exploits of which we have already chronicled, saw a good deal of active service during the last two years of the war; and though she finally fell into the hands of the enemy, it was only because the odds against her were not to be overcome by the most spirited resistance. It was on the 2d of June, 1780, that the "Trumbull," while cruising far out in the Atlantic Ocean in the path of British merchantmen bound for the West Indies, sighted a strange sail hull down to windward. The "Trumbull" was then in command of Capt. James Nicholson, an able and plucky officer. Immediately on hearing the report of the lookout, Nicholson ordered all the canvas furled, in order that the stranger might not catch sight of the "Trumbull." It is, of course, obvious that a ship under bare poles

is a far less conspicuous object upon the ocean, than is the same ship with her yards hung with vast clouds of snowy canvas. But apparently the stranger sighted the "Trumbull," and had no desire to avoid her; for she bore down upon the American ship rapidly, and showed no desire to avoid a meeting. Seeing this, Nicholson made sail, and was soon close to the stranger. As the two ships drew closer together, the stranger showed her character by firing three guns, and hoisting the British colors.

Seeing an action impending, Nicholson called his crew aft and harangued them, as was the custom before going into battle. It was not a promising outlook for the American ship. She was but recently out of port, and was manned largely by "green hands." The privateers had so thoroughly stripped the decks of able seamen, that the "Trumbull" had to ship men who knew not one rope from another; and it is even said, that, when the drums beat to quarters the day of the battle, many of the sailors were suffering from the landsman's terror, seasickness. But what they lacked in experience, they made up in enthusiasm.

With the British flag at the peak, the "Trumbull" bore down upon the enemy. But the stranger was not to be deceived by so hackneyed a device. He set a private signal, and, as the Americans did not answer it, let fly a broadside at one hundred yards distance. The "Trumbull" responded with spirit, and the stars and stripes went fluttering to the peak in the place of the British ensign. Then the thunder of battle continued undiminished for two hours and a half. The wind was light, and the vessels rode on an even keel nearly abreast of each other, and but fifty yards apart. At times their yard-arms interlocked; and still the heavy broadsides rang out, and the flying shot crashed through beam and stanchion, striking down the men at their guns, and covering the decks with blood. Twice the flying wads of heavy paper from the enemy's guns set the "Trumbull" afire, and once the British ship was endangered by the same cause.

At last the fire of the enemy slackened, and the Americans, seeing victory within their grasp, redoubled their efforts; but at this critical moment one of the gun-deck officers came running to Nicholson, with the report that the main-mast had been repeatedly hit by the enemy's shot, and was now tottering. If the main-mast went by the board, the

fate of the "Trumbull" was sealed. Crowding sail on the other masts, the "Trumbull" shot ahead, and was soon out of the line of fire, the enemy being apparently too much occupied with his own injuries to molest her. Hardly had she gone the distance of a musket-shot, when her main and mizzen top-masts went by the board; and before the nimble jackies could cut away the wreck the other spars followed, until nothing was left but the fore-mast. When the crashing and confusion was over, the "Trumbull" lay a pitiable wreck, and an easy prey for her foe.

But the Briton showed a strange disinclination to take advantage of the opportunity. The Yankee sailors worked like mad in cutting away the wreck; then rushed to their guns, ready to make a desperate, if hopeless, resistance in case of an attack. But the attack never came. Without even a parting shot the enemy went off on her course; and before she was out of sight her main top-mast was seen to fall, showing that she too had suffered in the action.

Not for months after did the crew of the "Trumbull" learn the name of the vessel they had fought. At last it was learned that she was a heavy letter-of-marque, the "Watt." Her exact weight of metal has never been ascertained, though Capt. Nicholson estimated it at thirty four or thirty-six guns. The "Trumbull" mounted thirty-six guns. The captain of the "Watt" reported his loss to have been ninety-two in killed and wounded; the loss of the "Trumbull" amounted to thirty-nine, though two of her lieutenants were among the slain. This action, in severity, ranked next to the famous naval duel between the "Bon Homme Richard" and the "Serapis."

As the "Trumbull" fought her last battle under the flag of the United States a year later, and as our consideration of the events of the Revolution is drawing to a close, we may abandon chronological order, and follow Nicholson and his good ship to the end of their career. In August, 1781, the "Trumbull" left the Delaware, convoying twenty-eight merchantmen, and accompanied by one privateer. Again her crew was weakened by the scarcity of good seamen, and this time Nicholson had adopted the dangerous and indefensible expedient of shipping British prisoners-of-war. There were fifty of these renegades in the crew; and naturally, as they were ready to traitorously abandon their own country, they were equally ready for treachery to the flag under which they

sailed. There were many instances during the Revolution of United States ships being manned largely by British prisoners. Usually the crews thus obtained were treacherous and insubordinate. Even if it had been otherwise, the custom was a bad one, and repugnant to honorable men.

So with a crew half-trained and half-disaffected, the "Trumbull" set out to convoy a fleet of merchantmen through waters frequented by British men-of-war. Hardly had she passed the capes when three British cruisers were made out astern. One, a frigate, gave chase. Night fell, and in the darkness the "Trumbull" might have escaped with her charges, but that a violent squall struck her, carrying away her fore-top-mast and main-top-gallant-mast. Her convoy scattered in all directions, and by ten o'clock the British frigate had caught up with the disabled American.

The night was still squally, with bursts of rain and fitful flashes of lightning, which lighted up the decks of the American ship as she tossed on the waves. The storm had left her in a sadly disabled condition. The shattered top hamper had fallen forward, cumbering up the fore-castle, and so tangling the bow tackle that the jibs were useless. The foresail was jammed and torn by the fore-topsail-yard. There was half a day's work necessary to clear away the wreck, and the steadily advancing lights of the British ship told that not half an hour could be had to prepare for the battle.

There was no hope that resistance could be successful, but the brave hearts of Nicholson and his officers recoiled from the thought of tamely striking the flag without firing a shot. So the drummers were ordered to beat the crew to quarters; and soon, by the light of the battle-lanterns, the captains of the guns were calling over the names of the sailors. The roll-call had proceeded but a short time when it became evident that most of the British renegades were absent from their stations. The officers and marines went below to find them. While they were absent, others of the renegades, together with about half of the crew whom they had tainted with their mutinous plottings, put out the battle-lanterns, and hid themselves deep in the hold. At this moment the enemy came up, and opened fire.

Determined to make some defence, Nicholson sent the few faithful

jackies to the guns, and the officers worked side by side with the sailors. The few guns that were manned were served splendidly, and the unequal contest was maintained for over an hour, when a second British man-of-war came up, and the "Trumbull" was forced to strike. At no time had more than forty of her people been at the guns. To this fact is due the small loss of life; for, though the ship was terribly cut up, only five of her crew were killed, and eleven wounded.

The frigate that had engaged the "Trumbull" was the "Iris," formerly the "Hancock" captured from the Americans by the "Rainbow." She was one of the largest of the American frigates, while the "Trumbull" was one of the smallest. The contest, therefore, would have been unequal, even had not so many elements of weakness contributed to the "Trumbull's" discomfiture.

Taking up again the thread of our narrative of the events of 1780, we find that for three months after the action between the "Trumbull" and the "Watt" there were no naval actions of moment. Not until October did a United States vessel again knock the tompions from her guns, and give battle to an enemy. During that month the cruiser "Saratoga" fell in with a hostile armed ship and two brigs. The action that followed was brief, and the triumph of the Americans complete. One broadside was fired by the "Saratoga;" then, closing with her foe, she threw fifty men aboard, who drove the enemy below. But the gallant Americans were not destined to profit by the results of their victory; for, as they were making for the Delaware, the British seventy-four "Intrepid" intercepted them, and recaptured all the prizes. The "Saratoga" escaped capture, only to meet a sadder fate; for, as she never returned to port, it is supposed that she foundered with all on board.

The autumn and winter passed without any further exploits on the part of the navy. The number of the regular cruisers had been sadly diminished, and several were kept blockaded in home ports. Along the American coast the British cruisers fairly swarmed; and the only chance for the few Yankee ships afloat was to keep at sea as much as possible, and try to intercept the enemy's privateers, transports, and merchantmen, on their way across the ocean.

One United States frigate, and that one a favorite ship in the navy, was ordered abroad in February, 1781, and on her voyage did some

brave work for her country. This vessel was the "Alliance," once under the treacherous command of the eccentric Landais, and since his dismissal commanded by Capt. John Barry, of whose plucky fight in the "Raleigh" we have already spoken. The "Alliance" sailed from Boston, carrying an army officer on a mission to France. She made the voyage without sighting an enemy. Having landed her passenger, she set out from l'Orient, with the "Lafayette," forty, in company. The two cruised together for three days, capturing two heavy privateers. They then parted, and the "Alliance" continued her cruise alone.

On the 28th of May the lookout reported two sail in sight; and soon the strangers altered their course, and bore down directly upon the American frigate. It was late in the afternoon, and darkness set in before the strangers were near enough for their character to be made out. At dawn all eyes on the "Alliance" scanned the ocean in search of the two vessels, which were then easily seen to be a sloop-of-war and a brig. Over each floated the British colors.

A dead calm rested upon the waters. Canvas was spread on all the ships, but flapped idly against the yards. Not the slightest motion could be discerned, and none of the ships had steerage-way. The enemy had evidently determined to fight; for before the sun rose red and glowing from beneath the horizon, sweeps were seen protruding from the sides of the two ships, and they gradually began to lessen the distance between them and the American frigate. Capt. Barry had no desire to avoid the conflict; though in a calm, the lighter vessels, being manageable with sweeps, had greatly the advantage of the "Alliance," which could only lie like a log upon the water. Six hours of weary work with the sweeps passed before the enemy came near enough to hail. The usual questions and answers were followed by the roar of the cannon, and the action began. The prospects for the "Alliance" were dreary indeed; for the enemy took positions on the quarters of the helpless ship, and were able to pour in broadsides, while she could respond only with a few of her aftermost guns. But, though the case looked hopeless, the Americans fought on, hoping that a wind might spring up, that would give the good ship "Alliance" at least a fighting chance.

As Barry strode the quarter-deck, watching the progress of the fight, encouraging his men, and looking out anxiously for indications of a wind,

a grape-shot struck him in the shoulder, and felled him to the deck. He was on his feet again in an instant; and though weakened by the pain, and the rapid flow of blood from the wound, he remained on deck. At last, however, he became too weak to stand, and was carried below. At this moment a flying shot carried away the American colors; and, as the fire of the "Alliance" was stopped a moment for the loading of the guns, the enemy thought the victory won, and cheered lustily. But their triumph was of short duration; for a new ensign soon took the place of the vanished one, and the fire of the "Alliance" commenced again.

The "Alliance" was now getting into sore straits. The fire of the enemy had told heavily upon her, and her fire in return had done but little visible damage. As Capt. Barry lay on his berth, enfeebled by the pain of his wound, and waiting for the surgeon's attention, a lieutenant entered.

"The ship remains unmanageable, sir," said he. "The rigging is badly cut up, and there is danger that the fore-top-mast may go by the board. The enemy's fire is telling on the hull, and the carpenter reports two leaks. Eight or ten of the people are killed, and several officers wounded. Have we your consent to striking the colors?"

"No, sir," roared out Barry, sitting bolt upright. "And, if this ship can't be fought without me, I will be carried on deck."

The lieutenant returned with his report; and, when the story became known to the crew, the jackies cheered for their dauntless commander.

"We'll stand by the old man, lads," said one of the petty officers.

"Ay, ay, that we will! We'll stick to him right manfully," was the hearty response.

But now affairs began to look more hopeful for the "Alliance." Far away a gentle rippling of the water rapidly approaching the ship gave promise of wind. The quick eye of an old boatswain caught sight of it. "A breeze, a breeze!" he cried; and the jackies took up the shout, and sprang to their stations at the ropes, ready to take advantage of the coming gust. Soon the breeze arrived, the idly flapping sails filled out, the helmsman felt the responsive pressure of the water as he leaned upon the wheel, the gentle ripple of the water alongside gladdened the ears of the blue-jackets, the ship keeled over to leeward, then swung around responsive to her helm, and the first effective broadside went

crashing into the side of the nearest British vessel. After that, the conflict was short. Though the enemy had nearly beaten the "Alliance" in the calm, they were no mateh for her when she was able to manœuvre. Their resistance was plucky; but when Capt. Barry came on deck, with his wound dressed, he was just in time to see the flags of both vessels come fluttering to the deck.

The two prizes proved to be the "Atlanta" sixteen, and the "Trepassy" fourteen. Both were badly cut up, and together had suffered a loss of forty-one men in killed and wounded. On the "Alliance" were eleven dead, and twenty-one wounded. As the capture of the two vessels threw about two hundred prisoners into the hands of the Americans, and as the "Alliance" was already crowded with captives, Capt. Barry made a cartel of the "Trepassy," and sent her into an English port with all the prisoners. The "Atlanta" he manned with a prize crew, and sent to Boston; but she unluckily fell in with a British cruiser in Massachusetts Bay, and was retaken.

Once more before the cessation of hostilities between Great Britain and the United States threw her out of commission, did the "Alliance" exchange shots with a hostile man-of-war. It was in 1782, when the noble frigate was engaged in bringing specie from the West Indies. She had under convoy a vessel loaded with supplies, and the two had hardly left Havana when some of the enemy's ships caught sight of them, and gave chase. While the chase was in progress, a fifty-gun ship hove in sight, and was soon made out to be a French frigate. Feeling that he had an ally at hand, Barry now wore ship, and attacked the leading vessel, and a spirited action followed, until the enemy, finding himself hard pressed, signalled for his consorts, and Barry, seeing that the French ship made no sign of coming to his aid, drew off.

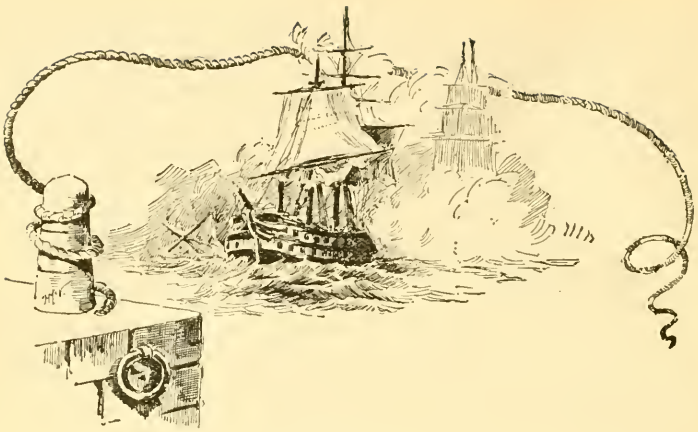
Irritated by the failure of the French frigate to come to his assistance, Barry bore down upon her and hailed. The French captain declared that the manœuvres of the "Alliance" and her antagonist had made him suspect that the engagement was only a trick to draw him into the power of the British fleet. He had feared that the "Alliance" had been captured, and was being used as a decoy; but now that the matter was made clear to him, he would join the "Alliance" in pursuit of the enemy. This he did; but Barry soon found that the fifty was so

slow a sailer, that the "Alliance" might catch up with the British fleet, and be knocked to pieces by their guns, before the Frenchman could get within range. Accordingly he abandoned the chase in disgust, and renewed his homeward course. Some years later, an American gentleman travelling in Europe met the British naval officer who commanded the frigate which Barry had engaged. This officer, then a vice-admiral, declared that he had never before seen a ship so ably fought as was the "Alliance," and acknowledged that the presence of his consorts alone saved him a drubbing.

This engagement was the last fought by the "Alliance" during the Revolution, and with it we practically complete our narrative of the work of the regular navy during that war. One slight disaster to the American cause alone remains to be mentioned. The "Confederacy," a thirty-two-gun frigate built in 1778, was captured by the enemy in 1781. She was an unlucky ship, having been totally dismasted on her first cruise, and captured by an overwhelming force on her second.

Though this chapter completes the story of the regular navy during the Revolution, there remain many important naval events to be described in an ensuing chapter. The work of the ships fitted out by Congress was aided greatly by the armed cruisers furnished by individual States, and privateers. Some of the exploits of these crafts and some desultory maritime hostilities we shall describe in the next chapter. And if the story of the United States navy, as told in these few chapters, seems a record of events trivial as compared with the gigantic naval struggles of 1812 and 1861, it must be remembered that not only were naval architecture and ordnance in their infancy in 1776, but that the country was young, and its sailors unused to the ways of war. But that country, young as it was, produced Paul Jones; and it is to be questioned whether any naval war since has brought forth a braver or nobler naval officer, or one more skilled in the handling of a single ship-of-war.

The result of the war of the Revolution is known to all. A new nation was created by it. These pages will perhaps convince their readers that to the navy was due somewhat the creation of that nation. And if to-day, in its power and might, the United States seems inclined to throw off the navy and belittle its importance, let the memory of Paul Jones and his colleagues be conjured up, to awaken the old enthusiasm over the triumphs of the stars and stripes upon the waves.



## CHAPTER XIV.

WORK OF THE PRIVATEERS.—THE "GEN. HANCOCK" AND THE "LEVANT."—EXPLOITS OF THE "PICKERING."—THE "REVENGE."—THE "HOLKAR"—THE "CONGRESS" AND THE "SAVAGE."—THE "HYDER ALI" AND THE "GEN. MONK."—THE WHALE-BOAT HOSTILITIES.—THE OLD JERSEY PRISON-SHIP.

TO CHRONICLE in full the myriad exploits and experiences of the privateers and armed cruisers in the service of individual states during the Revolution, would require a volume thrice the size of this. Moreover, it is difficult and well-nigh impossible to obtain authentic information regarding the movements of this class of armed craft. An immense number of anecdotes of their prowess is current, and some few such narratives will be repeated in this chapter; but, as a rule, they are based only upon tradition, or the imperfect and often incorrect reports in the newspapers of the day.

The loss inflicted upon Great Britain by the activity of American privateers was colossal. For the first year of the war the Continental Congress was unwilling to take so belligerent a step as to encourage privateering; but, in the summer of 1776, the issuing of letters of marque and reprisal was begun, and in a short time all New England had gone to privateering. The ocean fairly swarmed with trim Yankee schooners and

brigs, and in the two years that followed nearly eight hundred merchantmen were taken.

Discipline on the privateers was lax, and the profits of a successful cruise were enormous. Often a new speedy craft paid her whole cost of construction on her first cruise. The sailors fairly revelled in money at the close of such a cruise; and, like true jack-tars, they made their money fly as soon as they got ashore. A few days would generally suffice to squander all the earnings of a two-months' cruise; and, penniless but happy, Jack would ship for another bout with fortune.

A volume could be written dealing with the exploits of the privateers, but for our purpose a few instances of their dash and spirit will be enough. Though the purpose of the privateers was purely mercenary, their chief end and aim being to capture defenceless merchantmen, yet they were always ready to fight when fighting was necessary, and more than once made a good showing against stronger and better disciplined naval forces. In many cases audacity and dash more than made up for the lack of strength.

In 1777 two American privateers hung about the British Isles, making captures, and sending their prizes into French ports. The exploits of Paul Jones were equalled by these irregular cruisers. One of them, being in need of provisions, put into the little Irish port of Beerhaven, and lay at anchor for ten hours, while her crew scoured the town in search of the needed stores. A second privateer boldly entered a harbor on the Island of Guernsey. A castle at the entrance of the harbor opened fire upon her, whereupon she came about, and, keeping out of range of the castle guns, captured a large brig that was making for the port. When night fell, the privateer sent a boat's crew ashore, and took captive two officers of the local militia.

In 1778 occurred an action between a private armed ship and a British frigate, in which the privateer was signally successful. On the 19th of September of that year, the "Gen. Hancock," a stout-built, well armed and manned privateer, fell in with the "Levant," a British frigate of thirty-two guns. The "Hancock" made no attempt to avoid a conflict, and opened with a broadside without answering the enemy's hail. The action was stubbornly contested upon both sides. After an hour of fighting, the captain of the Yankee ship, peering through the smoke, saw that the colors no longer waved above his adversary.

"Have you struck?" he shouted.

"No. Fire away," came the response faintly through the roar of the cannon. Two hours longer the combat raged, with the ships lying yard-arm to yard-arm. A ball struck Capt. Hardy of the "Hancock" in the neck, and he was carried below, while the first lieutenant took command of the ship. A few minutes later there arose a deafening roar and blinding flash; a terrific shock threw the men on the American ship to the deck. Stifling smoke darkened the atmosphere; and pieces of timber, cordage, and even horribly torn bits of human flesh began to fall upon the decks. When the smoke cleared away, the Americans looked eagerly for their enemy. Where she had floated a minute or two before, was now a shattered, blackened hulk fast sinking beneath the waves. The surface of the sea for yards around was strewn with wreckage, and here and there men could be seen struggling for life. As ready to save life as they had been to destroy it, the Americans lowered their boats and pulled about, picking up the survivors of the explosion. The boatswain of the ill-fated ship and seventeen of the crew were thus saved, but more than fourscore brave fellows went down with her. The American vessel herself was damaged not a little by the violence of the explosion.

This was not the only case during this year in which a British man-of-war met defeat at the guns of a Yankee privateer. The "Hinchinbrooke," sloop-of-war fourteen; the "York," tender twelve; and the "Enterprise," ten guns, — all struck their colors to private armed vessels flying the stars and stripes.

By 1778 the privateers under the British flag were afloat in no small number. America had no commerce on which they might prey, and they looked forward only to recapturing those British vessels that had been taken by Yankee privateers and sent homeward. That so many British vessels should have found profitable employment in this pursuit, is in itself a speaking tribute to the activity of the American private armed navy.

During the Revolution, as during the second war with Great Britain in 1812, Salem, Mass., and Baltimore, Md., were the principal points from which privateers hailed. In all the early wars of the United States, the term "Salem privateer" carried with it a picture of a fleet schooner, manned with a picked crew of able seamen, commanded by a lanky Yankee

skipper who knew the byways of old ocean as well as the highways of trade, armed with eight, four, or six pounders, and a heavy "Long Tom" amidships. Scores of such craft sailed from Salem during the Revolution; and hardly a week passed without two or three returning privateers entering the little port and discharging their crews, to keep the little village in a turmoil until their prize money was spent, or, to use the sailors' phrase, until "no shot was left in the locker."

One of the most successful of the Salem privateers was the "Pickering," a craft carrying a battery of sixteen guns, and a crew of forty-seven men. On one cruise she fought an engagement of an hour and a half with a British cutter of twenty guns; and so roughly did she handle the enemy, that he was glad to sheer off. A day or two later, the "Pickering" overhauled the "Golden Eagle," a large schooner of twenty-two guns and fifty-seven men. The action which followed was ended by the schooner striking her flag. A prize crew was then put aboard the "Golden Eagle," and she was ordered to follow in the wake of her captor. Three days later the British sloop-of-war "Achilles" hove in sight, and gave chase to the privateer and her prize. After a fifteen hours' chase the prize was overhauled; and the sloop-of-war, after taking possession of her, continued in pursuit of the privateer. But while the privateersmen had preferred flight to fighting while nothing was at stake, they did not propose to let their prize be taken from them without a resistance, however great the odds against them. Accordingly they permitted the "Achilles" to overhaul them, and a sharp action followed. The British tried to force the combat by boarding; but the Americans, with pikes and cutlasses, drove them back to their own ship. Then the two vessels separated, and during the rest of the conflict came no nearer each other than the length of a pistol-shot. At this distance they carried on a spirited cannonade for upwards of three hours, when the "Achilles," concluding that she had had enough, sheered off. Thereupon, the "Pickering" coolly ran back to her late prize, took possession of her, captured the lieutenant and prize crew that the "Achilles" had put in charge of her, and continued her cruise.

A good example of the Baltimore privateers was the "Revenge," mounting eighteen guns, with a crew of fifty men. In 1780 this vessel was commanded by Capt. Alexander Murray of the regular navy. She was engaged by a large number of Baltimore merchants to convoy a fleet

of merchantmen, but had hardly started to sea with her charges when she fell in with a fleet of British vessels, and was forced to retreat up the Patuxent River. While there, the American fleet was strengthened by several privateers and armed merchant-vessels which joined it, so that it was felt safe to try again to get to sea. Accordingly the attempt was made; but, though the captains of the fleet had signed a solemn compact to stand together in case of the danger, the sudden appearance of a fleet of hostile armed vessels sent all scurrying up the Patuxent again, except one brig and a schooner. The British fleet consisted of a ship of eighteen guns, a brig of sixteen, and three privateer schooners. Leaving the schooners to his two faithful consorts, Murray threw himself between the two larger vessels and the flying merchantmen. Seeing themselves thus balked of their prey, the enemy turned fiercely upon the "Revenge," but were met with so spirited a resistance, that they hauled off after an hour's fighting. The other American vessels behaved equally well, and the discomfiture of the British was complete.

Philadelphia, though not looked upon as a centre of privateering activity, furnished one privateer that made a notable record. This was the "Holkar," sixteen guns. In April, 1780, she captured a British schooner of ten guns; and in May of the same year she fought a desperate action with a British privateer brig, the name of which has never been ascertained. Twice the Briton sheered off to escape the telling fire of the American; but the "Holkar" pressed him closely, and only the appearance of a second British armed vessel at the scene of the action saved the Englishman from capture. This battle was one of the most sanguinary ever fought by private armed vessels; for of the crew of the "Holkar" six were killed and sixteen wounded, including the captain and first lieutenant, while of the enemy there were about the same number killed and twenty wounded. Three months later this same privateer fell in with the British sixteen-gun cutter "Hypocrite," and captured her after a sharp conflict.

Perhaps the most audacious privateering exploit was that of the privateers "Hero," "Hope," and "Swallow," in July, 1782. The captains of these craft, meeting after an unprofitable season upon the high seas, conceived the idea of making a descent upon the Nova Scotian town of Lunenberg, some thirty-five miles from Halifax. Little time was wasted

in discussion. Privateers are not hampered by official red tape. So it happened that early in the month the three privateers appeared off the harbor of the threatened town, having landed a shore party of ninety men. Before the invaders the inhabitants retreated rapidly, making some slight resistance. Two block-houses, garrisoned by British regulars, guarded the town. One of these fortresses the Americans burned, whereupon the British established themselves in the second, and prepared to stand a siege. Luckily for the Americans, the block-house was within range of the harbor; so that the three privateers took advantageous positions, and fired a few rounds of solid shot into the enemy's wooden citadel. The besieged then made haste to raise the white flag, and surrendered themselves prisoners-of-war. When the Yankee ships left the harbor, they took with them a large quantity of merchandise and provisions, and a thousand pounds sterling by way of ransom.

One more conflict, in which the irregular naval forces of the United States did credit to themselves, must be described before dismissing the subject of privateering. In September, 1781, the British sloop-of-war "Savage" was cruising off the southern coast of the United States. Her officers and men were in a particularly good humor, and felt a lively sense of self-satisfaction; for they had just ascended the Potomac, and plundered Gen. Washington's estate, — an exploit which would make them heroes in the eyes of their admiring countrymen.

Off Charleston the "Savage" encountered the American privateer "Congress," of about the same strength as herself, — twenty guns and one hundred and fifty men. In one respect the "Congress" was the weaker; for her crew was composed largely of landsmen, and her marines were a company of militia, most of whom were sadly afflicted with seasickness. Nevertheless, the Yankee craft rushed boldly into action, opening fire with her bow-chasers as soon as she came within range. Like two savage bull-dogs, the two ships rushed at each other, disdaining all manœuvring, and seemingly intent only upon locking in a deadly struggle, yard-arm to yard-arm. At first the "Savage" won a slight advantage. Swinging across the bow of the "Congress," she raked her enemy twice. But soon the two ships lay side by side, and the thunder of the cannon was constant. The militia-marines on the "Congress" did good service. Stationed in the tops, on the forecastle, the quarter-deck, and every elevated place on

the ship, they poured down upon the deck of the enemy a murderous fire. The jackies at the great guns poured in broadsides so well directed that soon the "Savage" had not a rope left with which to manage the sails. Her quarter-deck was cleared, and not a man was to be seen to serve as a mark for the American gunners. So near lay the two vessels to each other, that the fire from the guns scorched the gunners on the opposite ship. The antagonists were inextricably entangled; for the mizzen-mast of the "Savage" had been shot away, and had fallen into the after-rigging of the "Congress." There was no flight for the weaker vessel. When she could no longer fight, surrender was her only recourse. Neither vessel showed any colors, for both ensigns had been shot away early in the action. Accordingly, when the boatswain of the "Savage" was seen upon the forecastle wildly waving his arms, it was taken as an evidence of surrender; and the fire slackened until his voice could be heard.

"Give us quarter," he cried hoarsely; "we are a wreck, and strike our flag."

The firing then ceased; but, when the lieutenant of the "Congress" ordered a boat lowered in which to board the prize, the old boatswain came back with the report, —

"Boats all knocked to pieces, sir. Couldn't find one that would float."

Accordingly the two vessels had to be slowly drawn together, and the boarding party reached the deck of the prize by clambering over a spar which served as a bridge. When they reached the prize, they found her decks covered with dead and wounded men. The slaughter had been terrible. Twenty-three men were killed, and thirty-one wounded. On the "Congress" were thirty, killed and wounded together. One of the wounded Americans was found lying with his back braced against the foot of the bowsprit, cheering for the victory, and crying, —

"If they have broken my legs, my hands and heart are still whole."

Throughout this sanguinary action both parties showed the greatest courage and determination. Two vessels of the two most perfectly organized regular navies in the world could not have been better handled, nor could they have more stubbornly contested for the victory.

A class of armed vessels outside the limits of the regular navy, but very active and efficient in the service of the country, was the maritime

forces of the individual states. Before Congress had seen the necessity for a naval force, several of the colonies had been alive to the situation, and fitted out cruisers of their own. Even after the Revolution had developed into a war of the first magnitude, and after the colonies had assumed the title of states, and delegated to Congress the duty of providing for the common defence, they still continued to fit out their own men-of-war to protect their ports and act as convoys for their merchant fleets. Though vessels in this service seldom cruised far from the coast of their home colony, yet occasionally they met the vessels of the enemy, and many sharp actions were fought by them.

Of all the actions fought by the State cruisers, the most hotly contested was that between the Pennsylvania cruiser "Hyder Ali," and the British sloop-of-war "Gen. Monk." The "Hyder Ali" was a merchant man, bought by the state just as she was about departing on a voyage to the West Indies. She was in no way calculated for a man-of-war; but the need was pressing, and she was pierced for eight ports on a side, and provided with a battery of six-pounders. The command of this vessel was given to Joshua Barney, a young officer with an extensive experience of Yankee privateers and British prisons, and whose later exploits in the United States navy are familiar to readers of "Blue-Jackets of 1812."

Barney's instructions were, not to go to sea, but to patrol the Delaware River and Bay, and see that no privateer lay in wait for the merchant-vessels that cleared from the port of Philadelphia. In April, 1782, the "Hyder Ali" stood down Delaware Bay at the head of a large fleet of outward-bound merchantmen. When Cape May was reached, strong head-winds sprang up, and the whole fleet anchored to await more favorable weather before putting out to sea. While they lay at anchor, the "Hyder Ali" sighted a trio of British vessels, two ships and a brig, rounding the cape. Instantly Barney signalled his convoy to trip anchor and retreat, a signal which was promptly obeyed by all save one too daring craft, that tried to slip round the cape, and get to sea, but fell into the hands of the enemy. Soon the whole fleet, with the "Hyder Ali" bringing up the rear, fled up the bay. The British followed in hot pursuit.

At a point half-way up the bay the pursuers parted; one of the ships, a frigate, cutting through a side channel in the hope of intercepting the fugitives. The other two pursuers, a privateer brig and a sloop-of-war,

continued in the wake of the "Hyder Ali." The brig proved herself a clipper, and soon came up with the American vessel, which promptly offered battle. The challenge was declined by the privateer, which fired a harmless broadside, and continued on up the bay. Barney let her pass, for he had determined to risk the dangers of an unequal combat with the sloop-of-war. This vessel came up rapidly; and as she drew near Barney luffed up suddenly, and let fly a broadside. This somewhat staggered the enemy, who had expected only a tame surrender; but she quickly recovered, and came boldly on. At this juncture Barney turned to his helmsman, and said, —

"Now, when I give the word, pay no attention to my order, but put the helm hard-a-starboard. Pay no heed to the actual command I may give you."

The British vessel was then within half pistol-shot, and her forward guns were beginning to bear. From his station on the quarter-deck Barney shouted to his steersman in stentorian tones, —

"Port your helm. Hard-a-port."

The order was clearly heard on board the enemy, and he prepared to manœuvre his ship accordingly. But the steersman of the "Hyder Ali" remembered his instructions; and before the enemy discovered the ruse, the American ship lay athwart the other's bow, and the bowsprit of the enemy was caught in the "Hyder Ali's" rigging, giving the latter a raking position. Quickly the Yankee gunners seized the opportunity. Not five miles away was a British frigate ready to rush to the assistance of her consort, and whatever was to be done by the bold lads of Pennsylvania had to be done with expedition. No cheer rose from their ranks; but with grim determination they worked at the great guns, pouring in rapid and effective broadsides. The explosions of the two batteries were like the deafening peals of thunder echoed and re-echoed in some mountain-gorge. Smoke hid the vessels from sight, and the riflemen in the tops could only occasionally catch sight of the figures of the enemy. The enemy had twenty guns to Barney's sixteen; but he was outmanœuvred at the start, and this disadvantage he never overcame. Half an hour from the time of the opening of the battle, his flag was struck, and the Americans, with lusty cheers, took possession of their prize. There was no time for ceremony. The frigate had seen the conflict from afar, and

was bearing down upon the two antagonists. So without even asking the name of the captured vessel, Barney hastily threw a prize crew aboard, ordered her to proceed to Philadelphia, and himself remained behind to cover the retreat.

Some hours later, having escaped the British frigate, the two vessels sailed up to a Philadelphia wharf. The scars of battle had been in no way healed: the tattered sails, the shattered hulls and bulwarks, the cordage hanging loosely from the masts, told the story of battle. The crowd that rushed to the wharf, and peered curiously about the decks of the two vessels, saw a ghastly and horrible sight. For the battle had been as sanguinary as it was spirited, and the dead still lay where they fell. On the British vessel, the "Gen. Monk," lay the lifeless bodies of twenty men; while twenty-six wounded, whose blood stained the deck, lay groaning in the cockpit below. On the "Hyder Ali" were four killed and eleven wounded.

This action, for steadiness and brilliancy, was not surpassed by any naval duel of the war of the Revolution. By it the name of Joshua Barney was put upon a plane with those of the most eminent commanders in the regular navy; and had not the war speedily terminated, he would have been granted a commission and a ship by the United States.

While the chief naval events of the war for independence have now been recounted, there still remain certain incidents connected more or less closely with the war on the water, which deserve a passing mention. One of these is the curious desultory warfare carried on in and about New York Harbor by fishermen and longshoremen in whale-boats, dories, sharpies, and similar small craft.

From 1776 until the close of the war, New York City and the region bordering upon the harbor were occupied by the British. Provisions were needed for their support, and were brought from Connecticut and New Jersey in small sailing craft, chiefly whale-boats. These boats the patriots often intercepted, and desperate encounters upon the water were frequent. Nor did the Yankee boatmen confine their attacks to the provision boats alone. In the summer of 1775 the British transport "Blue Mountain Valley" was captured by a band of hardy Jerseymen, who concealed themselves in the holds of four small sail-boats until fairly alongside the enemy's vessel, when they swarmed out and drove the British from the deck of their vessel.

Two New Jersey fishermen, Adam Hyler and William Marriner, were particularly active in this class of warfare. Twice the British sent armed forces to capture them, and, failing in that, burned their boats. But the sturdy patriots were undaunted, and building new boats, waged a relentless war against the followers of King George. Every Tory that fished in the bay was forced to pay them tribute; and many of these gentry, so obnoxious to the Yankees, were visited in their homes at dead of night, and solemnly warned to show more moderation in their disapproval of the American cause. When the occasion offered, the two Jerseymen gathered armed bands, and more than one small British vessel fell a prey to their midnight activity. Two British corvettes were captured by them in Coney Island Bay, and burned to the water's edge. With one of the blazing vessels forty thousand dollars in specie was destroyed, — a fact that Hyler bitterly lamented when he learned of it.

No narrative of the events of the Revolution would be complete without some description of the floating prison-houses in which the British immured the hapless soldiers and sailors who fell into their hands. Of these the chief one was a dismasted hulk known as the "Old Jersey" prison-ship, and moored in Wallabout Bay near New York City. No pen can adequately describe the horrors of this prison; but some extracts from the published recollections of men once imprisoned in her noisome hold will give some idea of the miserable fate of those condemned to be imprisoned on her.

Thomas Andros, a sailor taken by the British with the privateer "Fair American," writes of the "Old Jersey:" "This was an old sixty-four-gun ship, which, through age, had become unfit for further actual service. She was stripped of every spar and all her rigging. After a battle with a French fleet, her lion figure-head was taken away to repair another ship. No appearance of ornament was left, and nothing remained but an old unsightly rotten hulk; and doubtless no other ship in the British navy ever proved the means of the destruction of so many human beings. It is computed that no less than eleven thousand American seamen perished in her. When I first became an inmate of this abode of suffering, despair, and death, there were about four hundred prisoners on board; but in a short time they amounted to twelve hundred. In a short time we had two hundred or more sick and dying lodged in the forepart of the lower gun-

deck, where all the prisoners were confined at night. Utter derangement was a common symptom of yellow-fever; and to increase the horror of the darkness that surrounded us (for we were allowed no light between decks), the voice of warning would be heard, 'Take heed to yourselves. There is a madman stalking through the ship with a knife in his hand.' I sometimes found the man a corpse in the morning, by whose side I laid myself down at night. In the morning the hatchways were thrown open; and we were allowed to ascend on the upper deck all at once, and remain on the upper deck all day. But the first object that met our view in the morning was an appalling spectacle, — a boat loaded with dead bodies, conveying them to the Long Island shore, where they were very slightly covered."

Ebenezer Fox, another privateersman, has left his recollections of this dreadful prison. His description of the food upon which the unhappy prisoners were forced to subsist is interesting: —

"Our bill of fare was as follows: on Sunday, one pound of biscuit, one pound of pork, and half a pint of pease; Monday, one pound of biscuit, one pint of oatmeal, and two ounces of butter; Tuesday, one pound of biscuit, and two pounds of salt beef; Wednesday, one and a half pounds of flour, and two ounces of suet; Thursday was a repetition of Sunday's fare; Friday, of Monday's; and Saturday, of Tuesday's.

"If this food had been of good quality and properly cooked, as we had no labor to perform, it would have kept us comfortable, at least from suffering; but this was not the case. All our food appeared to be damaged. As for the pork, we were cheated out of it more than half the time; and when it was obtained, one would have judged from its motley hues, exhibiting the consistence and appearance of variegated fancy soap, that it was the flesh of the porpoise or sea-hog, and had been an inhabitant of the ocean rather than of the stye. The pease were generally damaged, and, from the imperfect manner in which they were cooked, were about as indigestible as grape-shot. The butter the reader will not suppose was the real 'Goshen;' and had it not been for its adhesive properties to hold together the particles of the biscuit, that had been so riddled by the worms as to lose all their attraction of cohesion, we should have considered it no desirable addition to our viands."

But it is unnecessary to prolong the painful description of the horrors of this floating charnel house. Its name and record must ever rest as a dark stain upon the name of England. It is seldom possible in war-time to house and care for the immense hordes of prisoners-of-war with the same regard for their comfort which is shown ordinarily to convicted felons. War is brutal; it is unfeeling, and the weaker party must always suffer. But such sufferings as those of the "Old Jersey" captives can be excused upon no ground. There was no need to crowd hundreds of men into a space hardly large enough for a few score. To starve her prisoners, should not be part of a great nation's policy. The one plea which England can urge in extenuation of the "Old Jersey" is that it had its day at a time when those broad principles of humanity, now so generally accepted, had not yet been applied to the rules of war.

With this chapter ends the narrative of the naval events of the war of the Revolution. It was not a great naval war, for the belligerent nations were not sufficiently well matched in naval strength. But it brought forth Paul Jones and more than one other brave and able commander. It established a new flag upon the seas, a flag that has ever since held an honorable position among the insignia of the foremost nations of the earth. And in the war of the Revolution, as in every war in which the United States has taken part since, there was manifested the wonderful ability of the American people to rush into a conflict half prepared, and gain daily in strength until the cause for which they fight is won. In 1776 that cause was liberty, and in its behalf none fought more bravely than the lads who wore the blue jackets of the American navy.

## CHAPTER XV.

THE NAVY DISBANDED. — AGGRESSIONS OF BARBARY CORSAIRS. — A DISGRACEFUL TRIBUTE. — BAINBRIDGE AND THE DEY. — GEN. EATON AT TUNIS. A SQUADRON SENT TO THE MEDITERRANEAN. — — DECATUR AND THE SPANIARDS. — THE "ENTERPRISE" AND THE "TRIPOLI." — AMERICAN SLAVES IN ALGIERS.

PEACE having been signed with Great Britain in 1783, the nucleus of a navy then in existence was disbanded. Partly this was due to the disinclination of the sturdy Republicans to keep a standing establishment, either naval or military, in time of peace. The same tendency of the American mind to disregard the adage, "In time of peace, prepare for war," is observable to-day. But the chief reason for the dissolution of the navy lay in the impossibility of collecting funds to pay for its maintenance. The states had formed themselves into a confederacy, but so jealously had each state guarded its individual rights, that no power was left to the general government. The navy being a creation of the general government, was therefore left without means of support; and in 1785 the last remaining frigate, the "Alliance," was sold because there was not enough money in the treasury to pay for her needed repairs.

For eight years thereafter the nation remained without a navy. But gradually there sprung up a very considerable maritime commerce under the flag of the United States. The stars and stripes began to be a familiar sight in sea-ports as far away as China and Japan. But as far as it afforded any protection to the vessel above which it waved, that banner might have been a meaningless bit of striped bunting. In 1785 the Dey of Algiers, looking to piracy for his income, sent his piratical cruisers out into the Atlantic to seize upon the merchantmen of the new nation that

had no navy to enforce its authority. Two vessels were captured, and their crews sold into disgraceful slavery in Algiers.

When the first Congress of the United States under the present Constitution assembled, President Washington called the attention of the law-makers to the crying need for a navy. But war had set in between Portugal and Algiers; the Algerian corsairs were blockaded in their ports, and American vessels were enjoying a temporary immunity from piratical attack. Therefore Congress hesitated.

But in 1793 peace was suddenly arranged between Portugal and Algiers. Immediately the corsairs swarmed out of the Mediterranean Sea, and swooped down upon the American merchantmen. In a few weeks four ships were in their hands, and the gangs of white slaves in Tunis and Tripoli were re-enforced by nearly two hundred luckless Yankee sailors. Then Congress awoke, and ordered the immediate building of six frigates. The ships were laid down, the work was well under way, naval officers had been appointed, and every thing seemed to point to the revival of the American navy, when a treaty was negotiated with Algiers and all work was stopped.

And what a treaty it was! By it the United States relinquished every claim to the rights of a sovereign nation. It agreed to pay an annual tribute to the piratical Dey, in consideration of his granting to American vessels the right of travel on the high seas. And when some slight delay occurred in making the first payment of tribute, the obsequious government presented the Barbary corsair with a frigate, to allay his wrath.

We must pass hastily over the time during which this iniquitous treaty was in force. Suffice it to say, that by it the United States paid the Dey more than a million dollars. For the same sum his piratical establishment might have been scattered like the sands of the desert.

In May, 1800, it fell to the lot of Capt. William Bainbridge, commanding the frigate "George Washington," to carry the annual tribute to Algiers. On arriving there he was treated with contempt by the Dey, who demanded that he put the "Washington" at the service of Algiers, to carry her ambassador to Constantinople. "You pay me tribute, by which you become my slaves," said the Dey; "I have therefore a right to order you as I may think proper."

Bainbridge protested, but to no avail. He had anchored his frigate

under the guns of the Dey's castle, and to disobey meant capture and slavery. Accordingly he complied, but despatched a letter to the authorities at home, saying, "I hope I may never again be sent to Algiers with tribute, unless I am authorized to deliver it from the mouth of our cannon."

When Bainbridge reached the United States, after faithfully discharging the errand of the Dey, he found that it was unlikely that either he or any other officer would be forced to carry any further tribute to the Barbary pirates. For, while the tribute paid to Algiers had merely changed the attitude of that country from open hostility to contemptuous forbearance, it had brought the other Barbary states clamoring to the United States for tribute. Tunis and Tripoli demanded blood-money; and each emphasized its demand by capturing a few Yankee merchantmen, and selling their crews into slavery.

The agents or ambassadors sent by the United States to these powers were treated with the utmost contempt; and while their lives were often in danger, their property was always considered the fair prey of the Barbarian ruler to whose domain they were sent. To Tunis was sent Gen. William Eaton, an American politician, who has left a record of his experiences in the land of the Bey. Some of the entries in his journal are very pithy. Thus under the date of Aug. 11, 1799, he wrote, —

"Some good friend had informed the Bey that I had an elegant Grecian mirror in my house. To-day he sent a request for it, pretending that he wanted it for the cabin of his pleasure-boat, now about to be launched. So it is. If the consuls have a good piece of furniture, or any other good thing which strikes the Bey's fancy, he never hesitates to ask for it; and they have no alternative but to give it. They have suffered this to become usance also.

"12th. Sent the Bey the mirror."

A letter from Gen. Eaton to the Secretary of State, in 1801, tells of the capacity of the Bey. A fire in the regal palace destroyed fifty thousand stand of small-arms. The next day the monarch ordered Eaton to procure from the United States ten thousand stand to help make up the loss. Eaton demurred. "The Bey did not send for you to ask your advice," said the prime minister, "but to order you to communicate his demands to your Government."

Eaton still protested, pointed out the fact that the United States had

already paid the Bey heavy tribute, and asked when these extortionate demands were to end.

"Never," was the cool response; and the interview ended.

But by this time the United States authorities had perceived the error they had committed in temporizing with the Barbary powers. They had quieted Algiers by the payment of a heavy tribute, and the gift of a frigate. But this had only excited the cupidity of the other petty states. Tunis demanded like tribute The Bashaw of Tripoli, discontented with his share of the spoils, cut down the flag-staff before the American consulate, and sent out his cruisers to prey upon American commerce Accordingly, on the 20th of May, 1801, the Secretary of the Navy ordered a squadron prepared to proceed to the Mediterranean, and bring the rapacious Arabs to terms.

The vessels chosen for this service were the "President," Commodore Richard Dale, "Philadelphia," Capt Barron; "Essex," Capt. Bainbridge, and the schooner "Enterprise," Lieut.-Commandant Sterrett. Though the fleet in itself was powerful, the commodore was hampered by the timid and vacillating instructions of Congress. War had not been actually declared, and he was therefore to commit no overt act of hostility. The vessels of the fleet were to be employed simply to convoy American merchantmen in and out of the Mediterranean Sea, and to be in readiness to ward off any hostile action on the part of any of the Barbary powers.

On July 1 the fleet entered the roadstead at Gibraltar, and anchored in the shadow of the famous rock. Here the Americans found two of the most rapacious of the Tripolitan corsairs lying at anchor; one a ship of twenty-six guns under the command of the Tripolitan admiral, and the other a brig of sixteen guns. To keep an eye on these piratical worthies, the "Philadelphia" was ordered to remain at Gibraltar, while the other vessels scattered. The "Essex" was ordered to cruise along the northern shore of the Mediterranean, gathering up all the American merchantmen, and convoying them to sea. The "President" and the "Enterprise" made sail for Algiers, to convince the ruler of that country that it would be impolitic for him to declare war against the United States at that time. The desired effect was produced; for the sight of an American frigate did more to tone down the harshness of the Dey's utterances, than could the most extortionate tribute.

The cruise of the "Essex" was uneventful, save for a dispute between the officers of the American man-of-war and a Spanish xebec in the roads of Barcelona. The trouble arose in this wise:—

The "Essex," though a small vessel, was perfectly appointed, of handsome model and appearance, and her crew was drilled to the highest possible state of discipline and efficiency. When she cast anchor at Barcelona, she straightway became the talk of the town, and her officers became the lions of the hour, vastly to the disgust of the Spaniards on the xebec lying in the same port. Accordingly they took every opportunity to annoy the Americans, challenging the boats of the "Essex" as they passed the xebec, and not scrupling to use abusive language to Capt. Bainbridge himself. One night a boat, under command of Lieut. Stephen Decatur, was brought under the guns of the xebec, and held there while the Spaniards shouted insults from the deck above. Decatur called for the officer in command, and remonstrated with him, but receiving no satisfaction, ordered his men to shove off, declaring he would call again in the morning.

Accordingly, in the forenoon of the following day, a boat from the "Essex," with Decatur in the stern-sheets, made for the Spanish vessel. Coming alongside, Decatur went on board, and asked for the officer who had been in command the night previous. He was told that the man he sought had gone ashore.

"Well, then," thundered Decatur, in tones that could be heard all over the vessel, "tell him that Lieut. Decatur of the frigate 'Essex' pronounces him a cowardly scoundrel, and when they meet on shore he will cut his ears off." And having thrown this bombshell into the enemy's camp, Decatur returned to his ship.

The duel was never fought, for the civil authorities bestirred themselves to prevent it. But the matter was taken up by the United States minister to Spain, who never permitted it to rest until the fullest apology was made by Spain for the indignities to which the American naval officers had been subjected.

After having collected a large number of merchantmen, and taken them safely out of the reach of Tripolitan cruisers, the "Essex" showed her colors in the chief Barbary ports, and rejoined the flagship in time to return to the United States in December.

While the "Essex" had been thus pacificly employed, the little schooner "Enterprise" had carried off the honors by fighting the first and only pitched battle of the year. This little craft, after accompanying the "President" to Algiers, was ordered to Malta. While on the way thither she fell in with a polacre-rigged ship flying the Tripolitan colors. Closer inspection showed her to be a notorious corsair, well known for the constant and merciless warfare she waged upon American merchantmen. The stars and stripes, floating at the peak of the American man-of-war, alarmed the Moors, and they opened fire without waiting for a hail. The "Enterprise" took up a position alongside, and at a distance of less than a pistol-shot. Broadside succeeded broadside in rapid succession. The aim of the Americans was better than that of the enemy, and the effect of their fire was observable whenever the breeze cleared away the dense smoke that hid the vessels from each other. But the ordnance of both was light, so that the combat was greatly prolonged. The vessels were almost equally matched; for the "Enterprise" carried twelve guns and ninety men, while the Tripolitan mounted fourteen guns, and had a crew of eighty-five men.

For two hours the battle continued, and the roar of the cannon and the rattle of small-arms were incessant. The day was calm and clear, with the still, warm air prevalent in the Mediterranean. Hardly was the breeze strong enough to carry away the sulphurous cloud of smoke that formed the one blot on the fair surface of the fairest of all seas. At last the Americans noticed that the fire of the enemy had ceased. Eagerly they peered through the smoke, and when the outline of their adversary could be made out, three ringing cheers told that the Tripolitan flag waved no longer in its place. Leaving their guns, the Americans were preparing to board the prize, when they were astonished to receive another broadside, and see the colors of their adversary again hoisted.

With cries of rage the Yankee seamen again went to quarters; and, if they had fought boldly before, they now fought viciously. They cared little to take the prize: their chief end was to send her, and the treacherous corsairs that manned her, to the bottom. The Tripolitans in their turn exerted every energy to conquer. Bringing their vessel alongside the "Enterprise," they strove repeatedly to board, only to be beaten back again and again. Finally, after receiving two raking broadsides from the "Enterprise," she again struck her flag.

This time Capt. Sterrett was in no haste to consider the combat ended. Keeping his men at the guns, he ordered the Tripolitan to come under the quarter of the "Enterprise." But no sooner had the enemy done so than she renewed the conflict for the third time, by attempting to board.

"No quarter for the treacherous dogs," was then the cry on the American vessel. "Fight on, and send them to the bottom."

The rest of the battle was wholly in favor of the "Enterprise." Several times she raked her antagonist, doing great execution. Many shots took effect between wind and water; and the cry arose on the decks of the Tripolitan, that she was sinking. The "Enterprise" kept at a safe distance, and by skilful sailing chose her own position, so that she could pour in a deliberate and murderous fire. Bitterly were the Tripolitans punished for their treachery. Their decks ran red with blood, half of their officers were shot down, the cries of their wounded rose shrill above the thunder of the cannon. Her flag was struck, but to this the American gunners paid no heed. The repeated treachery of the corsairs had left in the minds of the Yankee sailors but one thought, — to send the ship to the bottom, and rid the ocean of so pestiferous a craft.

But, enraged though they were, the Americans could not wholly cast aside their feelings of humanity. Though they had been twice deceived, they could not keep up their attack upon a vessel so sorely stricken as to be unable to respond to their fire. And when at last the commander of the Tripolitan, a venerable old man with a flowing beard, appeared in the waist of the ship, sorely wounded, and, bowing submissively, cast the colors of his vessel into the sea, then the fire of the "Enterprise" ceased, although the usages of war would have justified the Americans in exterminating their treacherous foe.

Having captured his enemy, Capt. Sterrett was in some uncertainty as to what to do with it. The instructions under which he sailed gave him no authority to take prizes. After some deliberation, he concluded to rob the captured vessel, which proved to be the "Tripoli," of her power for evil. Accordingly he sent Lieut. David Porter, the daring naval officer of whose exploits we have already spoken in the "Blue-Jackets of 1812," on board the prize, with instructions to dismantle her. Porter carried out his instructions admirably. With immense satisfaction the

jackies he took with him forced the Tripolitans to cut away their masts, throw overboard all their cannon, cutlasses, pistols, and other arms; cut their sails to pieces; throw all ammunition into the sea, and, to use a nautical expression, "strip the ship to a girtline." One jury-mast and small sail alone was left.

Porter then pointed out to the crestfallen Tripolitan captain, Mahomet Sons, that the "Enterprise" had not lost a man in the action, while of the corsairs not less than fifty were either killed or wounded.

"Go," said he sternly to the cowering Mussulman, "go tell the Bashaw of Tripoli, and the people of your country, that in future they may expect only a tribute of powder and ball from the sailors of the United States."

Amid the jeers and execrations of the Yankee tars, the crippled Tripolitan hulk, with her dead and dying, drifted slowly away. When she reached Tripoli, the anger of the Bashaw was unappeasable. He had expected his cruiser to return freighted deep with plunder, and crowded with American slaves. She had returned a dismantled hulk. In vain her commander showed his wounds to his wrathful master, and told of the size of his enemy, and the vigor of his resistance. The rage of the Bashaw demanded a sacrifice, and the luckless Mahomet Sons was led through the streets of Tripoli tied to a jackass. This in itself was the deepest degradation possible for a Mussulman, but the Bashaw supplemented it with five hundred bastinadoes well laid on. This severe punishment, together with the repeated assertions of the sailors of the defeated ship, that the dogs of Christians had fired enchanted shot, so terrified the seafaring people of Tripoli that it was almost impossible for the Bashaw to muster a ship's crew for a year after.

The battle between the "Enterprise" and the "Tripoli" alone saved the first year of the war from being entirely puerile. Certain it is that the distinguished naval officers who accompanied the fleet to the Mediterranean were so hedged about with political red tape, that they were powerless to take a step in defence of the honor of their country. While they were empowered to rescue any American ship that might be discovered in the grasp of a corsair, they were powerless to attempt the rescue of the hundreds of Americans held by Bashaw, Bey, and Dey as slaves. Commodore Dale, indeed, through diplomacy, managed to free a few of the enslaved

Americans. Having blockaded the harbor of Tripoli with the frigate "President," he captured a Greek vessel having a score or more of Tripolitan soldiers aboard. He then sent word to the Bashaw that he would exchange these prisoners for an equal number of Americans; but the monarch apparently cared little for his subjects, for he replied that he would not give one American slave for the whole lot. After much argument, an exchange was made upon the basis of three Tripolitans to one Yankee.

It is hard, even at this late day, to regard the policy of the United States towards the Barbary powers with feelings other than of mortification. Tunis, Tripoli, Algiers, and Morocco constantly preyed on our commerce, and enslaved our sailors. In the streets of Algiers worked American slaves, chained together, and wearing iron collars upon their necks. Their lives were the property of their owners, and they suffered unheard of privations and tortures. Yet at this very time the United States kept a consul in Algiers, and maintained friendly relations with the Dey. Indeed, a historian writing in 1795 applauds the American Government for the care it took of its citizens enslaved in Algiers, by providing each with a suit of clothing yearly!

But the continued aggressions and extortionate demands of the Barbary powers became at last unbearable. The expedition to the Mediterranean, under Commodore Dale, was but the premonitory muttering before the storm. Dale returned to the United States in December, 1801, and his report led to the organization of the naval expedition that was to finally crush the piratical powers of Barbary.

## CHAPTER XVI.

MORE VIGOROUS POLICY.—COMMODORE MORRIS SENT TO THE MEDITERRANEAN.—PORTER'S CUTTING-OUT EXPEDITION.—COMMODORE PREBLE SENT TO THE MEDITERRANEAN.—HIS ENCOUNTER WITH A BRITISH MAN-OF-WAR.—THE LOSS OF THE "PHILADELPHIA."—DECATUR'S DARING ADVENTURE.

THE return of Commodore Dale from the Mediterranean, and the reports which he brought of the continued aggressions and insolence of the Barbary powers, made a very marked change in the temper of the people of the United States. Early in 1802 Congress passed laws, which, though not in form a formal declaration of war, yet permitted the vigorous prosecution of hostilities against Tripoli, Algiers, or any other of the Barbary powers. A squadron was immediately ordered into commission for the purpose of chastising the corsairs, and was put under the command of Commodore Morris. The vessels detailed for this service were the "Chesapeake," thirty-eight; "Constellation," thirty-eight; "New York," thirty-six; "John Adams," twenty-eight; "Adams," twenty-eight; and "Enterprise," twelve. Some months were occupied in getting the vessels into condition for sea; and while the

"Enterprise" started in February for the Mediterranean, it was not until September that the last ship of the squadron followed her. It will be remembered that the "Philadelphia" and "Essex," of Dale's squadron, had been left in the Mediterranean; and as the "Boston," twenty-eight, had been ordered to cruise in those waters after carrying United States Minister Livingstone to France, the power of the Western Republic was well supported before the coast-line of Barbary.

The "Enterprise" and the "Constellation" were the first of the squadron to reach the Mediterranean, and they straightway proceeded to Tripoli to begin the blockade of that port. One day, while the "Constellation" was lying at anchor some miles from the town, the lookout reported that a number of small craft were stealing along, close in shore, and evidently trying to sneak into the harbor. Immediately the anchor was raised, and the frigate set out in pursuit. The strangers proved to be a number of Tripolitan gun-boats, and for a time it seemed as though they would be cut off by the swift-sailing frigate. As they came within range the "Constellation" opened a rapid and well-directed fire, which soon drove the gun-boats to protected coves and inlets in the shore. The Americans then lowered their boats with the intention of engaging the enemy alongshore, but at this moment a large body of cavalry came galloping out from town to the rescue. The Yankees, therefore, returned to their ship, and, after firing a few broadsides at the cavalry, sailed away.

Thereafter, for nearly a year, the record of the American squadron in the Mediterranean was uneventful. Commodore Morris showed little disposition to push matters to an issue, but confined his operations to sailing from port to port, and instituting brief and imperfect blockades.

In April, 1803, the squadron narrowly escaped being seriously weakened by the loss of the "New York." It was when this vessel was off Malta, on her way to Tripoli in company with the "John Adams" and the "Enterprise." The drums had just beat to grog; and the sailors, tin cup in hand, were standing in a line on the main deck waiting their turns at the grog-tub. Suddenly a loud explosion was heard, and the lower part of the ship was filled with smoke.

"The magazine is on fire," was the appalling cry; and for a moment confusion reigned everywhere. All knew that the explosion must have been near the magazine. There was no one to command, for at the grog

hour the sailors are left to their own occupations. So the confusion spread, and there seemed to be grave danger of a panic, when Capt. Chauncey came on deck. A drummer passed hurriedly by him.

"Drummer, beat to quarters!" was the quick, sharp command of the captain. The drummer stopped short, and in a moment the resonant roll of the drum rose above the shouts and the tramping of feet. As the well-known call rose on the air, the men regained their self-control, and went quietly to their stations at the guns, as though preparing to give battle to an enemy.

When order had been restored, Capt. Chauncey commanded the boats to be lowered; but the effect of this was to arouse the panic again. The people rushed from the guns, and crowded out upon the bowsprit, the spritsail-yard, and the knightheads. Some leaped into the sea, and swam for the nearest vessel. All strove to get as far from the magazine as possible. This poltroonery disgusted Chauncey.

"Volunteers, follow me," he cried. "Remember, lads, it's just as well to be blown through three decks as one."

So saying he plunged down the smoky hatchway, followed by Lieut David Porter and some other officers. Blinded and almost stifled by the smoke, they groped their way to the seat of the danger. With wet blankets, and buckets of water, they began to fight the flames. As their efforts began to meet with success, one of the officers went on deck, and succeeded in rallying the men, and forming two lines of water-carriers. After two hours' hard work, the ship was saved.

The explosion was a serious one, many of the bulkheads having been blown down, and nineteen officers and men seriously injured, of whom fourteen died. It came near leading to a still more serious blunder; for, when the flames broke out, the quartermaster was ordered to hoist the signal, "A fire on board." In his trepidation he mistook the signal, and announced, "A mutiny on board." Seeing this, Capt. Rodgers of the "John Adams" beat his crew to quarters, and with shotted guns and open ports took up a raking position astern of the "New York," ready to quell the supposed mutiny. Luckily he discovered his error without causing loss of life.

For a month after this incident, the ships were detained at Malta making repairs; but, near the end of May, the "John Adams," "Adams,"

"New York," and "Enterprise" took up the blockade of Tripoli. One afternoon a number of merchant vessels succeeded in evading the blockaders, and though cut off from the chief harbor of the town, yet took refuge in the port of Old Tripoli. They were small lanteen-rigged feluccas of light draught; and they threaded the narrow channels, and skimmed over shoals whither the heavy men-of-war could not hope to follow them. Scarcely had they reached the shore when preparations were made for their defence against any cutting-out party the Americans might send for their capture. On the shore near the spot where the feluccas were beached, stood a heavy stone building, which was taken possession of by a party of troops hastily despatched from the city. The feluccas were laden with wheat, packed in sacks; and these sacks were taken ashore in great numbers, and piled up on either side of the great building so as to form breastworks. So well were the works planned, that they formed an almost impregnable fortress. Behind its walls the Tripolitans stood ready to defend their stranded vessels.

That night Lieut. Porter took a light boat, and carefully reconnoitred the position of the enemy. He was discovered, and driven away by a heavy fire of musketry, but not before he had taken the bearings of the feluccas and their defences. The next morning he volunteered to go in and destroy the boats, and, having obtained permission, set out, accompanied by Lieut. James Lawrence and a strong party of sailors. There was no attempt at concealment or surprise. The Americans pushed boldly forward, in the teeth of a heavy fire from the Tripolitans. No attempt was made to return the fire, for the enemy was securely posted behind his ramparts. The Yankees could only bend to their oars, and press forward with all possible speed. At last the beach was reached, and boats-prows grated upon the pebbly sand. Quickly the jackies leaped from their places; and while some engaged the Tripolitans, others, torch in hand, clambered upon the feluccas, and set fire to the woodwork and the tarred cordage. When the flames had gained some headway, the incendiaries returned to their boats, and made for the squadron again, feeling confident that the Tripolitans could do nothing to arrest the conflagration. But they had underestimated the courage of the barbarians; for no sooner had the boats pushed off, than the Tripolitans rushed down to the shore, and strained every muscle for the preservation of

their ships. The men-of-war rained grape-shot upon them; but they persevered, and before Porter and his followers regained their ships, the triumphant cries of the Tripolitans gave notice the flames were extinguished. Porter had been severely wounded in the thigh, and twelve or fifteen of his men had been killed or wounded; so that the failure of the expedition to fully accomplish its purpose was bitterly lamented. The loss of the enemy was never definitely ascertained, though several were seen to fall during the conflict. On both sides the most conspicuous gallantry was shown; the fighting was at times almost hand to hand, and once, embarrassed by the lack of ammunition, the Tripolitans seized heavy stones, and hurled them down upon their assailants.

For some weeks after this occurrence, no conflict took place between the belligerents. Commodore Morris, after vainly trying to negotiate a peace with Tripoli, sailed away to Malta, leaving the "John Adams" and the "Adams" to blockade the harbor. To them soon returned the "Enterprise," and the three vessels soon after robbed the Bey of his largest corsair.

On the night of the 21st of June, an unusual commotion about the harbor led the Americans to suspect that an attempt was being made to run the blockade. A strict watch was kept; and, before morning, the "Enterprise" discovered a large cruiser sneaking along the coast toward the harbor's mouth. The Tripolitan was heavy enough to have blown the Yankee schooner out of the water; but, instead of engaging her, she retreated to a small cove, and took up a favorable position for action. Signals from the "Enterprise" soon brought the other United States vessels to the spot; while in response to rockets and signal guns from the corsair, a large body of Tripolitan cavalry came galloping down the beach, and a detachment of nine gunboats came to the assistance of the beleaguered craft.

No time was lost in manœuvring. Taking up a position within point-blank range, the "John Adams" and the "Enterprise" opened fire on the enemy, who returned it with no less spirit. For forty-five minutes the cannonade was unabated. The shot of the American gunners were seen to hull the enemy repeatedly, and at last the Tripolitans began to desert their ship. Over the rail and through the open ports the panic-stricken corsairs dropped into the water. The shot of the Yankees had

made the ship's deck too hot a spot for the Tripolitans, and they fled with great alacrity. When the last had left the ship, the "John Adams" prepared to send boats to take possession of the prize. But at this moment a boat-load of Tripolitans returned to the corsair; and the Americans, thinking they were rallying, began again their cannonade. Five minutes later, while the boat's-crew was still on the Tripolitan ship, she blew up. The watchers heard a sudden deafening roar; saw a volcanic burst of smoke; saw rising high above the smoke the main and mizzen masts of the shattered vessel, with the yards, rigging, and hamper attached. When the smoke cleared away, only a shapeless hulk occupied the place where the proud corsair had so recently floated. What caused the explosion, cannot be told. Were it not for the fact that many of the Tripolitans were blown up with the ship, it might be thought that she had been destroyed by her own people.

After this encounter, the three United States vessels proceeded to Malta. Here Commodore Morris found orders for his recall, and he returned to the United States in the "Adams." In his place Commodore Preble had been chosen to command the naval forces; and that officer, with the "Constitution," forty-four, arrived in the Mediterranean in September, 1802. Following him at brief intervals came the other vessels of his squadron, — the "Vixen" twelve, "Siren" sixteen, and "Argus" sixteen; the "Philadelphia" thirty-eight, and the "Nautilus" twelve, having reached the Mediterranean before the commodore. Three of these vessels were commanded by young officers, destined to win enduring fame in the ensuing war, — Stephen Decatur, William Bainbridge, and Richard Somers.

Before the last vessel of this fleet reached the Mediterranean, a disaster had befallen one of the foremost vessels, which cost the United States a good man-of-war, and forced a ship's crew of Yankee seamen to pass two years of their lives in the cells of a Tripolitan fortress. This vessel was the "Philadelphia," Capt. Bainbridge. She had reached the Mediterranean in the latter part of August, and signalled her arrival by overhauling and capturing the cruiser "Meshboha," belonging to the emperor of Morocco. With the cruiser was a small brig, which proved to be an American merchantman; and in her hold were found the captain and seven men, tied hand and foot. Morocco was then ostensibly on

friendly terms with the United States, and Bainbridge demanded of the captain of the cruiser by what right he had captured an American vessel. To this the Moor returned, that he had done so, anticipating a war which had not yet been declared.

"Then, sir," said Bainbridge sternly, "I must consider you as a pirate, and shall treat you as such. I am going on deck for fifteen minutes. If, when I return, you can show me no authority for your depredations upon American commerce, I shall hang you at the yard-arm."

So saying, Bainbridge left the cabin. In fifteen minutes he returned, and, throwing the cabin doors open, stepped in with a file of marines at his heels. In his hand he held his watch, and he cast upon the Moor a look of stern inquiry. Not a word was said, but the prisoner understood the dread import of that glance. Nervously he began to unbutton the voluminous waistcoats which encircled his body, and from an inner pocket of the fifth drew forth a folded paper. It was a commission directing him to make prizes of all American craft that might come in his path. No more complete evidence of the treachery of Morocco could be desired. Bainbridge sent the paper to Commodore Preble, and, after stopping at Gibraltar a day or two, proceeded to his assigned position off the harbor of Tripoli.

In the latter part of October, the lookout on the "Philadelphia" spied a vessel running into the harbor, and the frigate straightway set out in chase. The fugitive showed a clean pair of heels; and as the shots from the bow-chasers failed to take effect, and the water was continually shoaling before the frigate's bow, the helm was put hard down, and the frigate began to come about. But just at that moment she ran upon a shelving rock, and in an instant was hard and fast aground.

The Americans were then in a most dangerous predicament. The sound of the firing had drawn a swarm of gun-boats out of the harbor of Tripoli, and they were fast bearing down upon the helpless frigate. Every possible expedient was tried for the release of the ship, but to no avail. At last the gunboats, discovering her helpless condition, crowded so thick about her that there was no course open but to strike. And so, after flooding the magazine, throwing overboard all the small-arms, and knocking holes in the bottom of the ship, Bainbridge reluctantly surrendered.

Hardly had the flag touched the deck, when the gun-boats were alongside. If the Americans expected civilized treatment, they were sadly mistaken, for an undisciplined rabble came swarming over the taffrail. Lockers and chests were broken open, store-rooms ransacked, officers and men stripped of all the articles of finery they were wearing. It was a scene of unbridled pillage, in which the Tripolitan officers were as active as their men. An officer being held fast in the grasp of two of the Tripolitans, a third would ransack his pockets, and strip him of any property they might covet. Swords, watches, jewels, and money were promptly confiscated by the captors; and they even ripped the epaulets from the shoulders of the officers' uniforms. No resistance was made, until one of the pilferers tried to tear from Bainbridge an ivory miniature of his young and beautiful wife. Wresting himself free, the captain knocked down the vandal, and made so determined a resistance that his despoilers allowed him to keep the picture.

When all the portable property was in the hands of the victors, the Americans were loaded into boats, and taken ashore. It was then late at night; but the captives were marched through the streets to the palace of the Bashaw, and exhibited to that functionary. After expressing great satisfaction at the capture, the Bashaw ordered the sailors thrown into prison, while the officers remained that night as his guests. He entertained them with an excellent supper, but the next morning they were shown to the gloomy prison apartments that were destined to be their home until the end of the war. Of their life there we shall have more to say hereafter.

While this disaster had befallen the American cause before Tripoli, Commodore Preble in the flag-ship "Constitution," accompanied by the "Nautilus," had reached Gibraltar. There he found Commodore Rodgers, whom he was to relieve, with the "New York" and the "John Adams." Hardly had the commodore arrived, when the case of the captured Morocco ship "Meshboha" was brought to his attention; and he straightway went to Tangier to request the emperor to define his position with regard to the United States. Though the time of Commodore Rodgers on the Mediterranean station had expired, he consented to accompany Preble to Tangier; and the combined squadrons of the two commodores had so great an effect upon the emperor, that he speedily concluded a treaty. Commodore Rodgers then sailed for the United States, and Preble began his preparations for an active prosecution of the war with Tripoli.

It was on the 31st of October that the "Philadelphia" fell into the hands of the Tripolitans, but it was not until Nov. 27 that the news of the disaster reached Commodore Preble and the other officers of the squadron. Shortly after the receipt of the news, the commodore proceeded with his flag-ship, accompanied by the "Enterprise," to Tripoli, to renew the blockade which had been broken by the loss of the "Philadelphia."

It was indeed high time that some life should be infused into the war with Tripoli. Commodore Dale had been sent to the Mediterranean with instructions that tied him hand and foot. Morris, who followed him, was granted more discretion by Congress, but had not been given the proper force. Now that Preble had arrived with a sufficient fleet, warlike instructions, and a reputation for dash unexcelled by that of any officer in the navy, the blue-jackets looked for some active service. Foreign nations were beginning to speak scornfully of the harmless antics of the United States fleet in the Mediterranean, and the younger American officers had fought more than one duel with foreigners to uphold the honor of the American service. They now looked to Preble to give them a little active service. An incident which occurred shortly after the arrival of the "Constitution" in the Bay of Gibraltar convinced the American officers that their commodore had plenty of fire and determination in his character.

One night the lookouts reported a large vessel alongside, and the hail from the "Constitution" brought only a counter-hail from the stranger. Both vessels continued to hail without any answer being returned, when Preble came on deck. Taking the trumpet from the hand of the quarter-master, he shouted, —

"I now hail you for the last time. If you do not answer, I'll fire a shot into you."

"If you fire, I'll return a broadside," was the reply.

"I'd like to see you do it. I now hail you for an answer. What ship is that?"

"This is H. B. M. ship 'Donegal,' eighty-four; Sir Richard Strachan, an English commodore. Send a boat aboard."

"This is the United States ship 'Constitution,' forty-four," answered Preble, in high dudgeon; "Edward Preble, an American commodore; and I'll be d—d if I send a boat on board of any ship. Blow your matches, boys!"

The Englishman saw a conflict coming, and sent a boat aboard with profuse apologies. She was really the frigate "Maidstone," but being in no condition for immediate battle had prolonged the hailing in order to make needed preparations.

On the 23d of December, while the "Constitution" and "Enterprise" were blockading Tripoli, the latter vessel overhauled and captured the ketch "Mastico," freighted with female slaves that were being sent by the Bashaw of Tripoli to the Porte, as a gift. The capture in itself was unimportant, save for the use made of the ketch later.

The vessels of the blockading squadron, from their station outside the bar, could see the captured "Philadelphia" riding lightly at her moorings under the guns of the Tripolitan batteries. Her captors had carefully repaired the injuries the Americans had inflicted upon the vessel before surrendering. Her foremast was again in place, the holes in her bottom were plugged, the scars of battle were effaced, and she rode at anchor as pretty a frigate as ever delighted the eye of a tar.

From his captivity Bainbridge had written letters to Commodore Preble, with postscripts written in lemon-juice, and illegible save when the sheet of paper was exposed to the heat. In these postscripts he urged the destruction of the "Philadelphia." Lieut. Stephen Decatur, in command of the "Enterprise," eagerly seconded these proposals, and proposed to cut into the port with the "Enterprise," and undertake the destruction of the captured ship. Lieut.-Commander Stewart of the "Nautilus" made the same proposition; but Preble rejected both, not wishing to imperil a man-of-war on so hazardous an adventure.

The commodore, however, had a project of his own which he communicated to Decatur, and in which that adventurous sailor heartily joined. This plan was to convert the captured ketch into a man-of-war, man her with volunteers, and with her attempt the perilous adventure of the destruction of the "Philadelphia." The project once broached was quickly carried into effect. The ketch was taken into the service, and named the "Intrepid." News of the expedition spread throughout the squadron, and many officers eagerly volunteered their services. When the time was near at hand, Decatur called the crew of the "Enterprise" together, told them of the plan of the proposed expedition, pointed out its dangers, and called for volunteers. Every man and boy on the vessel

stepped forward, and begged to be taken. Decatur chose sixty-two picked men, and was about to leave the deck, when his steps were arrested by a young boy who begged hard to be taken.

"Why do you want to go, Jack?" asked the commodore.

"Well, sir," said Jack, "you see, I'd kinder like to see the country."

The oddity of the boy's reason struck Decatur's fancy, and he told Jack to report with the rest.

On the night of Feb. 3, 1804, the "Intrepid," accompanied by the "Siren," parted company with the rest of the fleet, and made for Tripoli. The voyage was stormy and fatiguing. More than seventy men were cooped up in the little ketch, which had quarters scarcely for a score. The provisions which had been put aboard were in bad condition, so that after the second day they had only bread and water upon which to live. When they had reached the entrance to the harbor of Tripoli, they were driven back by the fury of the gale, and forced to take shelter in a neighboring cove. There they remained until the 15th, repairing damages, and completing their preparations for the attack.

The weather having moderated, the two vessels left their place of concealment, and shaped their course for Tripoli. On the way, Decatur gave his forces careful instructions as to the method of attack. The Americans were divided into several boarding parties, each with its own officer and work. One party was to keep possession of the upper deck, another was to carry the gun-deck, a third should drive the enemy from the steerage, and so on. All were to carry pistols in their belts; but the fighting, as far as possible, was to be done with cutlasses, so that no noise might alarm the enemy in the batteries, and the vessels in the port. One party was to hover near the "Philadelphia" in a light boat, and kill all Tripolitans who might try to escape to the shore by swimming. The watchword for the night was "Philadelphia."

About noon, the "Intrepid" came in sight of the towers of Tripoli. Both the ketch and the "Siren" had been so disguised that the enemy could not recognize them, and they therefore stood boldly for the harbor. As the wind was fresh, Decatur saw that he was likely to make port before night; and he therefore dragged a cable and a number of buckets astern to lessen his speed, fearing to take in sail, lest the suspicions of the enemy should be aroused.

When within about five miles of the town, the "Philadelphia" became visible. She floated lightly at her anchorage under the guns of two heavy batteries. Behind her lay moored two Tripolitan cruisers, and near by was a fleet of gunboats. It was a powerful stronghold into which the Yankee blue-jackets were about to carry the torch.

About ten o'clock, the adventurers reached the harbor's mouth. The wind had fallen so that the ketch was wafted slowly along over an almost glassy sea. The "Siren" took up a position in the offing, while the "Intrepid," with her devoted crew, steered straight for the frigate. A new moon hung in the sky. From the city arose the soft low murmur of the night. In the fleet all was still.

On the decks of the "Intrepid" but twelve men were visible. The rest lay flat on the deck, in the shadow of the bulwarks or weather-boards. Her course was laid straight for the bow of the frigate, which she was to foul. When within a short distance, a hail came from the "Philadelphia." In response, the pilot of the ketch answered, that the ketch was a coaster from Malta, that she had lost her anchors in the late gale, and had been nearly wrecked, and that she now asked permission to ride by the frigate during the night. The people on the frigate were wholly deceived, and sent out ropes to the ketch, allowing one of the boats of the "Intrepid" to make a line fast to the frigate. The ends of the ropes on the ketch were passed to the hidden men, who pulled lustily upon them, thus bringing the little craft alongside the frigate. But, as she came into clearer view, the suspicions of the Tripolitans were aroused; and when at last the anchors of the "Intrepid" were seen hanging in their places at the cat-heads, the Tripolitans cried out that they had been deceived, and warned the strangers to keep off. At the same moment the cry, "Americanos! Americanos!" rang through the ship, and the alarm was given.

By this time the ketch was fast to the frigate. "Follow me, lads,' cried Decatur, and sprang for the chain-plates of the "Philadelphia' Clinging there, he renewed his order to board; and the men sprang to their feet, and were soon clambering on board the frigate. Lieut. Morris first trod the deck of the "Philadelphia," Decatur followed close after, and then the stream of men over the rail and through the open ports was constant. Complete as was the surprise, the entire absence of any

resistance was astonishing. Few of the Turks had weapons in their hands, and those who had fled before the advancing Americans. On all sides the splashing of water told that the affrighted Turks were trying to make their escape that way. In ten minutes Decatur and his men had complete possession of the ship.

Doubtless at that moment the successful adventurers bitterly regretted that they could not take out of the harbor the noble frigate they had so nobly recaptured. But the orders of the commodore, and the dangers of their own situation, left them no choice. Nothing was to be done but to set fire to the frigate, and retreat with all possible expedition. The combustibles were brought from the ketch, and piled about the frigate, and lighted. So quickly was the work done, and so rapidly did the flames spread, that the people who lit the fires in the storerooms and cockpit had scarce time to get on deck before their retreat was cut off by the flames. Before the ketch could be cast off from the sides of the frigate, the flames came pouring out of the port-holes, and flaming sparks fell aboard the smaller vessel, so that the ammunition which lay piled amidships was in grave danger of being exploded. Axes and cutlasses were swung with a will; and soon the bonds which held the two vessels together were cut, and the ketch was pushed off. Then the blue-jackets bent to their sweeps, and soon the "Intrepid" was under good headway.

"Now, lads," cried Decatur, "give them three cheers."

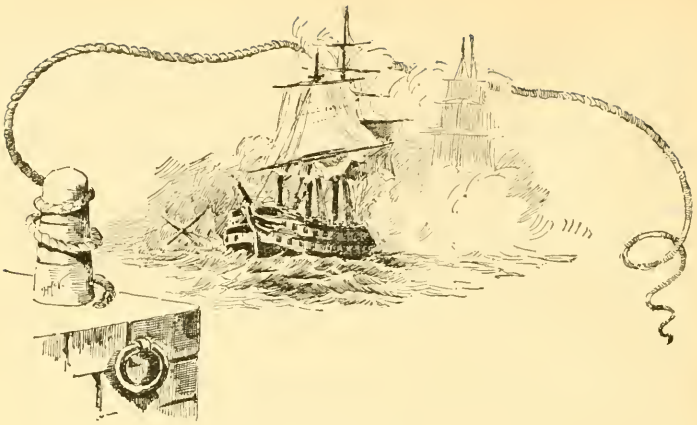
And the jackies responded with ringing cheers, that mingled with the roar of the flames that now had the frame of the "Philadelphia" in their control. Then they grasped their sweeps again, and the little vessel glided away through a hail of grape and round shot from the Tripolitan batteries and men-of-war. Though the whistle of the missiles was incessant, and the splash of round-shot striking the water could be heard on every side, no one in the boat was hurt; and the only shot that touched the ketch went harmlessly through her mainsail. As they pulled away, they saw the flames catch the rigging of the "Philadelphia," and run high up the masts. Then the hatchways were burst open, and great gusts of flame leaped out. The shotted guns of the frigate were discharged in quick succession; one battery sending its iron messengers into the streets of Tripoli, while the guns on the other side bore upon Fort English. The angry glare of the flames, and the flash of the cannon, lighted up the bay;

while the thunders of the cannonade, and the cries of the Tripolitans, told of the storm that was raging.

The ruddy light of the burning ship bore good news to two anxious parties of Decatur's friends. Capt. Bainbridge and the other American officers whom the Tripolitans had captured with the "Philadelphia" were imprisoned in a tower looking out upon the bay. The rapid thunder of the cannonade on this eventful night awakened them; and they rushed to their windows, to see the "Philadelphia," the Bashaw's boasted prize, in flames. Right lustily they added their cheers to the general tumult, nor ceased their demonstrations of joy until a surly guard came and ordered them from the windows.

Far out to sea another band of watchers hailed the light of the conflagration with joy. The "Siren" had gone into the offing when the "Intrepid" entered the harbor, and there awaited with intense anxiety the outcome of the adventure. After an hour's suspense, a rocket was seen to mount into the sky, and burst over Tripoli. It was the signal of success agreed upon. Boats were quickly lowered, and sent to the harbor's mouth to meet and cover the retreat of the returning party. Hardly had they left the side of the ship, when the red light in the sky told that the "Philadelphia" was burning; and an hour later Decatur himself sprang over the taffrail, and proudly announced his victory.

Not a man had been lost in the whole affair. As the expedition had been perfect in conception, so it was perfect in execution. The adventure became the talk of all Europe. Lord Nelson, England's greatest admiral, said of it, "It was the most bold and daring act of the ages." And when the news reached the United States, Decatur, despite his youth, was made a captain.



## CHAPTER XVII.

A STIRRING YEAR.—THE BOMBARDMENT OF TRIPOLI.—DECATUR'S HAND-TO-HAND FIGHT.—LIEUT. TRIPPE'S BRAVERY.—LIEUT. SPENCE'S BOLD DEED.—SOMERS'S NARROW ESCAPE.—THE FLOATING MINE.—THE FATAL EXPLOSION.—CLOSE OF THE WAR.—THE END.

DECATUR'S brilliant exploit set the key-note for the year 1804; and, for the remainder of that year, the Americans carried on the war with no less spirit and dash. A high degree of daring had been infused into the men by so notable an example; and long before the year was out, the blue-jackets began to consider themselves invincible, and were ready to undertake any exploit for which their services might be required.

The lesser events of the year, we must pass over hastily. The maintenance of the blockade of Tripoli led to one or two slight actions, and an occasional capture of little consequence. Thus, in March, the "Siren" captured the "Transfer," privateer, which was trying to run the blockade. A month or two later, a coasting felucca, loaded with supplies, was chased ashore near Tripoli, and two boats' crews were sent to take possession of her. The Tripolitans, as usual, sent out a body of cavalry to protect the felucca, and the Americans were driven off. Thereupon the American blockading squadron took up a position within range, and threw solid shot into the felucca until she was a

complete wreck. Nor did the Tripolitan cavalry escape without a shot or two.

But while the smaller vessels of the Mediterranean squadron were enforcing the blockade before Tripoli, Commodore Preble, with the flag-ship and the larger vessels, was at Malta preparing for a vigorous attack upon the city of the Bashaw itself. He had added to the fleet he had brought with him from the United States two bomb-vessels and six gunboats. He had also added somewhat to the armament of the "Constitution," and now proposed to try the effect upon Tripoli of a vigorous bombardment. By the 21st of July, the commodore was able to leave Malta with his fleet, fully prepared for active hostilities.

Tripoli was then defended by heavy batteries mounting a hundred and fifteen guns. In the harbor were moored nineteen gunboats, two galleys, two schooners, and a brig. The available force under the command of the Bashaw numbered not less than twenty-five thousand men. It was no pygmy undertaking upon which the Americans had embarked.

On the 31st of August, 1804, the first attack was made; and though only a bombardment of the town had been contemplated, there followed one of the most desperate hand-to-hand naval battles recorded in history.

It was a sultry midsummer day, and the white walls of the city of Tripoli glared under the fierce rays of a tropical sun. A light breeze stirred the surface of the water, and made life on the ships bearable. Before this breeze the American squadron ran down towards the town. All preparations had been made for a spirited bombardment; and as the Americans drew near the shore, they saw that the Tripolitans had suspected the attack, and had made ready for it.

The attacking forces formed into two lines, with the regular naval vessels in the rear, and the gunboats and bomb-vessels in front. As the vessels in the van were to bear the brunt of the battle, they were manned by picked crews from the larger vessels, and had for their officers the most daring spirits of the Mediterranean squadron. At half-past two the firing commenced, and soon from every vessel in the American line shells and shot were being thrown into the city of the Bashaw. The Tripolitan batteries returned the fire with vigor, and their gunboats pressed forward to drive the assailants back. At the approach of the Tripolitan gunboats, the Americans diverted their aim from the city, and,

loading with grape and canister, turned upon their foes a murderous fire. Upon the eastern division of the enemy's gunboats, nine in number, Decatur led the four boats under his command. The advance of the enemy was checked; but still the Americans pressed on, until fairly within the smoke of the Tripolitans' guns. Here the boats were held in position by the brawny sailors at the sweeps, while the gunners poured grape and canister into the enemy. Fearfully were the Americans outnumbered. They could hope for no help from their friends in the men-of-war in the rear. They were hemmed in on all sides by hostile gunboats, more strongly manned, and heavier in metal, than they. They were outnumbered three to one; for gunboat No. 3, which had belonged to Decatur's division, had drawn out of the fight in obedience to a signal for recall, which had been displayed by mistake on the "Constitution." Then Decatur displayed his desperate courage. Signalling to his companions to close with their adversaries and board, he laid his vessel alongside the nearest gunboat; and in a trice every American of the crew was swarming over the enemy's bulwarks. Taken by surprise, the Turks retreated. The gunboat was divided down the centre by a long, narrow hatchway; and as the Yankees came tumbling over the bulwarks, the Turks retreated to the farther side. This gave Decatur time to rally his men; and, dividing them into two parties, he sent one party around by the stern of the boat, while he led a party around the bow. The Turks were dazed by the suddenness of the attack, and cowed by the fearful effect of the Americans' last volley before boarding. Their captain lay dead, with fourteen bullets in his body. Many of the officers were wounded, and all the survivors were penned into a narrow space by the two parties of blue-jackets. The contest was short. Hampered by lack of room in which to wield their weapons, the Turks were shot down or bayoneted. Many leaped over the gunwale into the sea; many were thrown into the open hatchway; and the remnant, throwing down their arms, pleaded piteously for quarter. Decatur had no time to exult in his victory. Hastily securing his prisoners below decks, and making his prize fast to his own vessel, he bore down upon the Tripolitan next to leeward.

While shaping his course for this vessel, Decatur was arrested by a hail from the gunboat which had been commanded by his brother James. He was told that his brother had gallantly engaged and captured a Tripolitan

gunboat, but that, on going aboard of her after her flag had been struck, he had been shot down by the cowardly Turk who was in command. The murderer then rallied his men, drove the Americans away, and carried his craft out of the battle.

Decatur's grief for the death of his brother gave way, for the time, to his anger on account of the base treachery by which the victim met his death. Casting prudence to the winds, he turned his boat's prow towards the gunboat of the murderer, and, urging on his rowers, soon laid the enemy aboard. Cutlass in hand, Decatur was first on the deck of the enemy. Behind him followed close Lieut. Macdonough and nine blue-jackets. Nearly forty Turks were ready to receive the boarders. As the boarders came over the rail, they fired their pistols at the enemy, and then sprang down, cutlass in hand. The Turks outnumbered them five to one; but the Americans rallied in a bunch, and dealt lusty blows right and left. At last, Decatur singled out a man whom he felt sure was the commander, and the murderer of his brother. He was a man of gigantic frame; his head covered with a scarlet cap, his face half hidden by a bristly black beard. He was armed with a heavy boarding-pike, with which he made a fierce lunge at Decatur. The American parried the blow, and make a stroke at the pike, hoping to cut off its point. But the force of the blow injured the Tripolitan's weapon not a whit, while Decatur's cutlass broke short off at the hilt. With a yell of triumph the Turk lunged again. Decatur threw up his arm, and partially avoided the thrust; so that the pike pierced his breast, but inflicted only a slight wound. Grappling the weapon, Decatur tore it from the wound, wrested it from the Turk, and made a lunge at him, which he avoided. The combatants then clinched and fell to the deck, fiercely struggling for life and death. About them fought their followers, who strove to aid their respective commanders. Suddenly a Tripolitan officer, who had fought his way to a place above the heads of the two officers, aimed a blow at the head of Decatur. His victim was powerless to guard himself. One American sailor only was at hand. This was Reuben James, a young man whose desperate fighting had already cost him wounds in both arms, so that he could not lift a hand to save his commander. But, though thus desperately wounded, James had yet one offering to lay before his captain, — his life. And he showed himself willing to make this last and greatest sacrifice, by thrusting his head into the path

of the descending scimetar, and taking upon his own skull the blow intended for Decatur. The hero fell bleeding to the deck; a pistol-shot from an American ended the career of the Turk, and Decatur was left to struggle with his adversary upon the deck.

But by this time the great strength of the Turkish captain was beginning to tell in the death-struggle. His right arm was clasped like an iron band around the American captain, while with his left hand he drew from his belt a short *yataghan*, which he was about to plunge into the throat of his foe. Decatur lay on his side, with his eyes fixed upon the face of his foe. He saw the look of triumph flash in the eyes of the Turk; he saw the gleaming steel of the *yataghan* as it was drawn from its sheath. Mustering all his strength, he writhed in the grasp of his burly foe. He wrested his left arm clear, and caught the Turk's wrist just as the fatal blow was falling; then with his right hand he drew fron his pocket a small pistol. Pressing this tightly against the back of his enemy, he fired. The ball passed through the body of the Turk, and lodged in Decatur's clothing. A moment later the Tripolitan's hold relaxed, and he fell back dead; while Decatur, covered with his own blood and that of his foe, rose to his feet, and stood amidst the pile of dead and wounded men that had gathered during the struggle around the battling chiefs.

The fall of their captain disheartened the Tripolitans, and they speedily threw down their arms. The prize was then towed out of the line of battle; and, as by this time the American gunboats were drawing off, Decatur took his prizes into the shelter of the flag-ship.

While Decatur had been thus engaged, the gunboats under his command had not been idle. Lieut. Trippe, in command of No. 6, had fought a hand-to-hand battle that equalled that of Decatur. Trippe's plan of attack had been the same as that of his leader. Dashing at the enemy, he had let fly a round of grape and canister, then boarded in the smoke and confusion. But his boat struck that of the enemy with such force as to recoil; and Trippe, who had sprung into the enemy's rigging, found himself left with but nine of his people, to confront nearly two-score Tripolitans. The Americans formed in a solid phalanx, and held their ground bravely. Again the two commanders singled each other out, and a fierce combat ensued. The Turk was armed with a cutlass, while Trippe fought with a short boarding-pike. They fought

with caution, sparring and fencing, until each had received several slight wounds. At last the Tripolitan struck Trippe a crushing blow on the head. The American fell, half stunned, upon his knees; and at this moment a second Tripolitan aimed a blow at him from behind, but was checked and killed by an American marine. Rallying all his strength, Trippe made a fierce thrust at his adversary. This time the sharp pike found its mark, and passed through the body of the Tripolitan captain, who fell to the deck. His men, seeing him fall, abandoned the contest, and the Americans were soon bearing away their prize in triumph. But in the excitement of victory no one thought to haul down the Tripolitan flag, which still flaunted defiant at the end of the long lateen mast. So, when the prize came near the "Vixen," the American man-of-war, mistaking her for an enemy, let fly a broadside, that brought down flag, mast and all. Luckily no one was hurt, and the broadside was not repeated.

But by this time the wind had veered round into an unfavorable quarter, and the flag-ship showed a signal for the discontinuance of the action. The gunboats and their prizes were taken in tow by the schooners and brigs, and towed out of range of the enemy's shot. While this operation was going on, the "Constitution" kept up a rapid fire upon the shore batteries, and not until the last of the smaller craft was out of range, did she turn to leave the fray. As she came about, a shot came in one of her stern-ports, struck a gun near which Commodore Preble was standing, broke to pieces, and scattered death and wounds about.

When the squadron had made an offing, Preble hoisted a signal for the commanders to come aboard the flag-ship, and make their reports. He was sorely disappointed in the outcome of the fray, and little inclined to recognize the conspicuous instances of individual gallantry shown by his officers. He had set his heart upon capturing the entire fleet of nine Tripolitan gunboats, and the escape of six of them had roused his naturally irascible disposition to fury. As he stalked his quarter-deck, morose and silent, Decatur came aboard. The young officer still wore the bloody, smoke-begrimed uniform in which he had grappled with the Turk, his face was begrimed with powder, his hands and breast covered with blood. As he walked to the quarter-deck, he was the centre of observation of all on the flagship. Stepping up to the commodore, he said quietly, —

"Well, commodore, I have brought you out three of the gunboats."

Preble turned upon him fiercely, seized him with both hands by the collar, and shaking him like a schoolboy, snarled out, —

"Ay, sir, why did you not bring me more?"

The blood rushed to Decatur's face. The insult was more than he could bear. His hand sought his dagger, but the commodore had left the quarter-deck. Turning on his heel, the outraged officer walked to the side, and called his boat, determined to leave the ship at once. But the officers crowded about him, begging him to be calm, and reminding him of the notoriously quick temper of the commodore. While they talked, there came a cabin steward with a message. "The commodore wishes to see Capt. Decatur below." Decatur hesitated a moment, then obeyed. Some time passed, but he did not re-appear on deck. The officers became anxious, and at last, upon some pretext, one sought the commodore's cabin. There he found Preble and Decatur, sitting together, friendly, but both silent, and in tears. The apology had been made and accepted.

There is one humble actor in the first attack upon Tripoli, whom we cannot abandon without a word. This is Reuben James. That heroic young sailor quickly recovered from the bad wound he received when he interposed his own head to save his commander's life. One day Decatur called him aft, and publicly asked him what could be done to reward him for his unselfish heroism. The sailor was embarrassed and nonplussed. He rolled his quid of tobacco in his mouth, and scratched his head, without replying. His shipmates were eager with advice. "Double pay, Jack: the old man will refuse you nothing;" "a boatswain's berth;" "a pocket-full of money and shore leave," were among the suggestions. But James put them aside. He had decided.

"If you please, sir," said he, "let somebody else hand out the hammocks to the men when they are piped down. That is a sort of business that I don't exactly like."

The boon was granted; and ever afterwards, when the crew was piped to stow away hammocks, Reuben James sauntered about the decks with his hands in his pockets, the very personification of elegant leisure.

For modesty, the request of the preserver of Decatur is only equalled by that of the sailor who decided the battle between the "Bonne Homme

Richard" and the "Serapis." He had stationed himself on the yard-arm, and was dropping hand-grenades upon the deck of the "Serapis." At last a well-aimed grenade set fire to some powder on the enemy's ship, and virtually decided the day in favor of the Americans. When asked by Paul Jones what he would have as a reward for this great service, he suggested double rations of grog for the next week as the proper recompense. This he got, and no more.

But to return to the American fleet before Tripoli. Four days were spent in repairing damages, and on the 7th of August a second attack was made upon the town. The disposition of the American forces was much the same as on the occasion of the first attack, although the Americans were re-enforced by the three captured gunboats. The fighting was confined to long-range cannonading; for the enemy had been taught a lesson, and was afraid to try conclusions hand to hand with the Americans. About three o'clock in the afternoon, a tremendous explosion drew the gaze of every one to the spot where gunboat No. 8 had been anchored. At first only a dense mass of smoke, with the water surrounding it littered with wreckage, was to be seen. When the smoke cleared away, the extent of the disaster was evident. The gunboat had blown up. Her bow alone remained above water, and there a handful of plucky men were loading the great twenty-six-pound cannon that formed her armament. Lieut. Spence commanded the gunners, and urged them on.

"Now, lads, be lively," he cried. "Let's get one shot at the Turks before we sink."

Every ship in the squadron was cheering the devoted crew of No. 8. From every vessel anxious eyes watched the men who thus risked their lives for one shot. The water was rushing into the shattered hulk; and just as Spence pulled the lanyard, and sent a cast-iron shot into Tripoli, the wreck gave a lurch, and went down. Her crew was left struggling in the water. Spence, who could not swim, saved himself by clinging to an oar, while his men struck out for the nearer vessels, and were soon receiving the congratulations of their comrades.

In this attack, Richard Somers, a most courageous and capable officer, who a few weeks later met a tragic end, narrowly escaped death. He was in command of gunboat No. 1, and while directing the attack stood leaning against her flagstaff. He saw a shot flying in his direction.

Involuntarily he ducked his head, and the next instant the flying shot cut away the flagstaff just above him. When the action was over, Lieut. Somers stood by the pole, and found that the shot had cut it at the exact height of his chin.

After firing for about three hours, the American squadron drew off. Little had been accomplished, for the stone walls and fortresses of Tripoli were not to be damaged very greatly by marine artillery. The Americans themselves had suffered seriously. Their killed and wounded amounted to eighteen men. They had lost one gunboat by an explosion, and all the vessels had suffered somewhat from the Tripolitan fire.

That night the Americans were gladdened by the arrival of the frigate "John Adams," bringing letters and news from home. She brought also the information that re-enforcements were coming. Accordingly Preble determined to defer any further attack upon Tripoli until the arrival of the expected vessels. In the mean time he had several interviews with the Bashaw upon the subject of peace; but, as the Turk would not relinquish his claim of five hundred dollars ransom for each captive in his hands, no settlement was reached.

While waiting for the re-enforcements, Preble continued his preparations for another attack. The ships were put into fighting trim, munition hauled over, and repeated and thorough reconnoissances of the enemy's works made. It was while on the latter duty, that the brig "Argus" narrowly escaped destruction. With Preble on board, she stood into the harbor, and was just coming about before one of the batteries, when a heavy shot raked her bottom, cutting several planks half through. Had the shot been an inch higher, it would have sunk the brig.

By the 24th of August, Preble's patience was exhausted; and, without waiting longer for the expected squadron, he began an attack upon the town. On the night of the 24th, a few shells were thrown into Tripoli, but did little damage. Four days later, a more determined attack was made, in which every vessel in the squadron took part. Two of the enemy's gunboats were sunk; but with this exception little material damage was done, though the Americans chose the most advantageous positions, and fired fast and well. It was becoming evident that men-of-war were no match for stone walls.

During this engagement, the American fleet came within range of

the Bashaw's palace, and the flying shot and shell drove that dignitary and his suite to a bomb-proof dungeon. One heavy shot flew in at the window of the cell in which Capt. Bainbridge was confined, and striking the wall, brought down stones and mortar upon him as he lay in bed, so that he was seriously bruised. But the American captain was in no way daunted, and the next day wrote in sympathetic ink to Preble, telling him to keep up his fire, for the Tripolitans were greatly harassed by it.

On Sept. 3, yet another attack upon the town and fortress was made. As in the foregoing instances, nothing was accomplished except the throwing of a vast quantity of shot and shell. Capt. Bainbridge, in a secret letter to Preble, reported, that of the shells he had seen falling in the city very few exploded, and the damage done by them was therefore very light. Preble investigated the matter, and found that the fuse-holes of many of the shells had been stopped with lead, so that no fire could enter. The shells had been bought in Sicily, where they had been made to resist a threatened invasion by the French. It is supposed that they had been thus ruined by French secret agents.

But, before this time, Commodore Preble, and the officers under his command, had about reached the conclusion that Tripoli could not be reduced by bombardment. Accordingly they cast about for some new method of attack. The plan that was finally adopted proved unfortunate in this instance, just as similar schemes for the reduction of fortresses have prove futile throughout all history. Briefly stated, the plan was to send a fire-ship, or rather a floating mine, into the harbor, to explode before the walls of the fortress, and in the midst of the enemy's cruisers.

The ketch "Intrepid," which had carried Decatur and his daring followers out of the harbor of Tripoli, leaving the "Philadelphia" burning behind them, was still with the fleet. This vessel was chosen, and with all possible speed was converted into an "infernal," or floating mine. "A small room, or magazine, had been planked up in the hold of the ketch, just forward of her principal mast," writes Fenimore Cooper. "Communicating with this magazine was a trunk, or tube, that led aft to another room filled with combustibles. In the planked room, or magazine, were placed one hundred barrels of gunpowder in bulk; and on the deck, immediately above the powder, were laid fifty thirteen-and-a-half-inch shells, and one

hundred nine-inch shells, with a large quantity of shot, pieces of kentledge, and fragments of iron of different sorts. A train was laid in the trunk, or tube, and fuses were attached in the proper manner. In addition to this arrangement, the other small room mentioned was filled with splinters and light wood, which, besides firing the train, were to keep the enemy from boarding, as the flames would be apt to induce them to apprehend an immediate explosion."

Such was the engine of death prepared. The plan of operations was simply to put a picked crew on this floating volcano, choose a dark night, take the "infernal" into the heart of the enemy's squadron, fire it, and let the crew escape in boats as best they might.

The leadership of this desperate enterprise was intrusted to Lieut. Richard Somers. Indeed, it is probable that the idea itself originated with him, for a commanding officer would be little likely to assign a subordinate a duty so hazardous. Moreover, there existed between Decatur and Somers a generous rivalry. Each strove to surpass the other; and since Decatur's exploit with the "Philadelphia," Somers had been seeking an opportunity to win equal distinction. It is generally believed, that, having conceived the idea of the "infernal," he suggested it to Preble, and claimed for himself the right of leadership.

But ten men and one officer were to accompany Mr. Somers on his perilous trip. Yet volunteers were numerous, and only by the most inflexible decision could the importunate ones be kept back. The officer chosen was Lieut. Wadsworth of the "Constitution," and the men were chosen from that ship and from the "Nautilus."

As the time for carrying out the desperate enterprise drew near, Preble pointed out to the young commander the great danger of the affair, and the responsibility that rested upon him. Particularly was he enjoined not to permit the powder in the ketch to fall into the hands of the Tripolitans, who at that time were short of ammunition. One day, while talking with Somers, Preble burned a port-fire, or slow-match, and, noting its time, asked Somers if he thought the boats could get out of reach of the shells in the few minutes it was burning.

"I think we can, sir," was the quiet response.

Something in the speaker's tone aroused Preble's interest, and he said, —

"Would you like the port-fire shorter still?"

"I ask no port-fire at all," was the quiet reply.

At last the day of the adventure was at hand. It was Sept. 4, the day following the last attack upon Tripoli. The sky was overcast and lowering, and gave promise of a dark night. Fully convinced that the time for action was at hand, Somers called together the handful of brave fellows who were to follow him, and briefly addressed them. He told them he wished no man to go with him who did not prefer being blown up to being captured. For his part, he would much prefer such a fate, and he wished his followers to agree with him. For answer the brave fellows gave three cheers, and crowded round him, each asking to be selected to apply the match. Somers then passed among the officers and crew of the "Nautilus," shaking hands, and bidding each farewell. There were few dry eyes in the ship that afternoon; for all loved their young commander, and all knew how desperate was the enterprise in which he had embarked.

It was after dusk when the devoted adventurers boarded the powder-laden ketch, as she lay tossing at her anchorage. Shortly after they had taken possession, a boat came alongside with Decatur and Lieut. Stewart in the stern-sheets. The officers greeted their comrades with some emotion. They were all about of an age, followed one loved profession, and each had given proofs of his daring. When the time came for them to part, the leave-taking was serious, but tranquil. Somers took from his finger a ring, and breaking it into four pieces, gave one to each of his friends. Then with hearty handshakings, and good wishes for success, Decatur and Stewart left their friends.

On the ketch was one man who had not been accepted as a volunteer. This was Lieut. Israel of the "Constitution," who had smuggled himself aboard. With this addition to his original force, Somers ordered sail made, and the "Intrepid" turned her prow in the direction of the Tripolitan batteries.

As far as the harbor's mouth, she was accompanied by the "Argus," the "Vixen," and the "Nautilus." There they left her, and she pursued her way alone. It was a calm, foggy night. A few stars could be seen glimmering through the haze, and a light breeze ruffled the water, and wafted the sloop gently along her course. From the three vessels that waited outside the harbor's mouth, eager watchers with night-glasses kept

their gaze riveted upon the spectral form of the ketch, as she slowly receded from their sight. Fainter and fainter grew the outline of her sails, until at last they were lost to sight altogether. Then fitful flashes from the enemy's batteries, and the harsh thunder of the cannon, told that she had been sighted by the foe. The anxious watchers paced their decks with bated breath. Though no enemy was near to hear them, they spoke in whispers. The shadow of a great awe, the weight of some great calamity, seemed crushing them.

"What was that?"

All started at the abrupt exclamation. Through the haze a glimmering light had been seen to move rapidly along the surface of the water, as though a lantern were being carried along a deck. Suddenly it disappeared, as though dropped down a hatchway. A few seconds passed, — seconds that seemed like hours. Then there shot up into the sky a dazzling jet of fire. A roar like that of a huge volcano shook earth and sea. The vessels trembled at their moorings. The concussion of the air threw men upon the decks. Then the mast of the ketch, with its sail blazing, was seen to rise straight into the air, and fall back. Bombs with burning fuses flew in every direction. The distant sound of heavy bodies falling into the water and on the rocks was heard. Then all was still. Even the Tripolitan batteries were silent.

For a moment a great sorrow fell upon the Americans. Then came the thought that Somers and his brave men might have left the ketch before the explosion. All listened for approaching oars. Minutes lengthened into hours, and still no sound was heard. Men hung from the sides of the vessels, with their ears to the water, in the hopes of catching the sound of the coming boats. But all was in vain. Day broke; the shattered wreck of the "Intrepid" could be seen within the harbor, and near it two injured Tripolitan gunboats. But of Somers and his brave followers no trace could be seen, nor were they ever again beheld by their companions.

To Capt. Bainbridge in his prison-cell came a Tripolitan officer, several days later, asking him to go to a point of rocks, and view some bodies thrown there by the waves. Thither Bainbridge went, and was shown several bodies shockingly mutilated and burned. Though they were doubtless the remains of some of the gallant adventurers, they could not be identified.

The exact reason for this disaster can never be known. Many have thought that Somers saw capture inevitable, and with his own hand fired the fatal charge; others believed the explosion to be purely accidental; while the last and most plausible theory is, that a shot from the enemy's batteries penetrated the magazine, and ended the career of the "Intrepid" and her gallant crew. But however vexed the controversy over the cause of the explosion, there has been no denial of the gallantry of its victims. The names of all are honored in naval annals, while that of Somers became a battle-cry, and has been borne by some of the most dashing vessels of the United States navy.

It may be said that this episode terminated the war with Tripoli. Thereafter it was but a series of blockades and diplomatic negotiations. Commodore Barron relieved Preble, and maintained the blockade, without any offensive operations, until peace was signed in June, 1805. The conditions of that peace cannot be too harshly criticised. By it the United States paid sixty thousand dollars for American prisoners in the hands of the Bashaw, thus yielding to demands for ransom which no civilized nation should for a moment have considered. The concession was all the more unnecessary, because a native force of insurrectionists, re-enforced by a few Americans, was marching upon Tripoli from the rear, and would have soon brought the Bashaw to terms. But it was not the part of the navy to negotiate the treaty. That rested with the civilians. The duty of the blue-jackets had been to fight for their country's honor; and that they had discharged this duty well, no reader of these pages can deny.

# PART II

## BLUE JACKETS OF 1812

# BLUE-JACKETS OF 1812.

## CHAPTER I.

THE GATHERING OF THE WAR-CLOUD. — THE REVOLUTION ENDED, BUT THE WAR FOR INDEPENDENCE YET UNFOUGHT. — OUTRAGES UPON AMERICAN SAILORS. — THE RIGHT OF SEARCH. — IMPRESSMENT. — BOYHOOD OF COMMODORE PORTER. — EARLY DAYS OF COMMODORES PERRY AND BARNEY. — BURNING A PRIVATEER. — THE EMBARGO. — WAR INEVITABLE.

ON a bright November afternoon in the year 1783, the streets of New York City, bordering on the bay, were crowded with excited people, pushing and elbowing each other rudely, and all pressing down to the water-side, where was collected a huge crowd, looking anxiously across the broad waters of the noble bay, to a spot where lay anchored a large squadron of ships. The taut cordage,

the trimly squared yards, and the rows of cannon protruding from the open ports made it evident to the veriest landsman that many of the ships were men-of-war; while the scarlet flags crossed by the emblem of St. George, flaunting from the peak of every vessel, declared the allegiance of the fleet to the monarch of Great Britain, against whose rule the hardy Colonists had been for years waging a warfare, now to end in victory. Between the ships and the landing-place of old Fort George, that then stood where now extends the green sward of the Battery park, a fleet of long-boats was actively plying; the long, swinging strokes of the blue-clad sailors stamping them as men-o'-war's men beyond doubt. The landing-place was thronged with troops, whose glistening muskets, scarlet coats, gold trimmings, and waving plumes contrasted beautifully with the bright blue jackets of the sailors, as file after file of the soldiers boarded the boats, and were rowed away to the waiting ships. The troops drawn up on the shore formed long lines of scarlet against the green background of the bastions of Fort George. The men standing at rest talked loudly to each other of the coming voyage, and now and again shouted fiercely at some soberly clad citizen who strolled too near the warlike ranks; for had not all the sturdy citizens of New York come down to see the hated British evacuate the city, forced out by the troops of Gen. Washington (plain *Mr.* Washington, the British liked to call him)? The ragged gamins scurried here and there, yelling ribald jests at the departing soldiers; and the scarlet-coated troopers had hard work keeping down their rising anger, as suggestive cries of "boiled lobsters" rose on every side. Even the staid citizens could hardly conceal their exultation, as they thought that with those soldiers departed forever the rule of Great Britain over the Colonies. It was a quaint-looking crowd that had gathered that day, at the end of the little town. The sturdy mechanics and laborers, who were most numerous, were dressed in tight leather or yellow buckskin breeches, checked shirts, and flaming red flannel jackets. Their heads were covered with rusty felt hats, cocked up at the sides into a triangular shape, and decorated with feathers or bright buckles. On their feet were heavy leathern shoes, fastened with huge brass buckles that covered the entire instep. Here and there in the crowd stood a prosperous merchant or man of fashion, whose garb, if less rough than that of his humbler fellow-citizen, was no less odd and picturesque. At first sight, an observer might think that all the men of New York were white-haired; but a

closer examination would show that the natural color of the hair was hid by dense layers of white powder. The hair was done up in a short cue tied by black ribbons, and on top of all rested a three-cornered cocked hat, heavily laced with gold or silver braid. The coat was light-colored, with a profusion of silver buttons, stamped with the wearer's monogram,

DERELICT.

decorating the front. Over the shoulders hung a short cape. The knee-breeches, marvellously tight, ended at the tops of gaudy striped stockings, which in turn disappeared in the recesses of pointed shoes adorned with gleaming buckles. The broad cuffs of the coat-sleeves were heavily laden with lead, to keep them in proper position.

Such were the characteristics of the crowd that had assembled that day to witness the closing scene of British domination in America. Even as they stood there, they heard, faintly rising on the autumnal air, the sound of the fife and drum, as the American troops came marching down into the city, from their camp at the upper end of the island. And, as the last boat-load of grenadiers pushes off from the shore, the crowd, no longer restrained by the glittering bayonets, rushes down to the water's edge, and hurls taunts and gibes after the retreating boats, until the grizzled old soldiers curse the "Yankee rebels" fiercely, under their mustaches, and beg the officers to give them a volley.

Now the advance guard of the little American army, with fifes shrilling out the notes of "Yankee Doodle," comes marching down to the fort. No gay trappings, scarlet or gold lace about these soldiers, but ragged suits of homespun and homely flint-lock muskets, whose barrels are better burnished within than without. They march quickly to the water-front, and halt. The captain looks at the British squadron, now getting under way, and then, with true soldierly instinct, flashes a glance to the top of the flag-staff in the centre of the fort. His brow contracts, he stamps his foot, and the soldiers and citizens who have followed his glance break out into a cry of rage that rings far out over the placid waters of the bay, and makes the tough old British veterans chuckle grimly over the success of their little joke upon the Yankees; for there, high above the heads of the wrathful crowd, flaunting its scarlet folds over the roofs of the liberated city, floats proudly the British Flag.

"Tear it down!" The cry rises hoarsely from a thousand throats; and the Colonial officer springs with glittering sword to cut the halliards, but finds them cut away already, and the flag nailed to the mast. Then a trim sailor-boy works his way through the crowd, and, grasping the pole firmly, attempts to climb up, but soon slides down ingloriously over the greasy surface, freshly slushed by the British before their departure. The crowd yells in wrathful impotence; and a few hot-headed youths spring forward, axe in hand, to bring down pole and all to the earth. But the firm hand of the commanding officer restrains them. He whispers a few words into their ears; and they start briskly away, followed by a dozen or two of the steadily growing crowd.

"Gen. Washington will be here soon," says the captain; "we must get that rag down at once."

In a few minutes the messengers return. They have been to a neighboring hardware store, and startled the gray-haired old merchant so that he stared vaguely at them through his spectacles, as they fiercely demanded hammers, nails, and wooden cleats. Loaded with these, they dash back

CUTTING AWAY THE FLAG.

to the scene of action; and again the sailor-boy becomes the hero of the moment. With his pockets filled with cleats, and his mouth stuffed with nails, he begins again his ascent of the slippery staff. He nails cleat after cleat upon the pole, and step by step mounts toward the top. At last he reaches the flag; and, with a few quick jerks, it is torn from the

pole, and thrown contemptuously out into the air, to float down upon the crowd, and be torn to pieces by curiosity seekers. Then the halliards are lowered, and soon the flag of the young and struggling nation floats in the cool breeze; while from the neighboring heights the cannon of the forts speak in deep-mouthed salvos of applause, that mingle with the rejoicings of the people, and do not cease until the ships of the enemy have passed through the Narrows, and are out of sight and hearing. The British had evacuated New York, and America had won her independence.

Not many years, however, had passed after this memorable event, when the citizens not only of New York, but the people of all the United States, began to find out that America had not won her true independence, but merely a slight relief from the oppressions of Great Britain. Already the nations of Europe were beginning to encroach upon the rights and liberties of the infant nation. For this the States were themselves greatly to blame. Nobly as they had fought in unison to throw off the yoke of Great Britain, they fell into strife among themselves as soon as the war was at an end, and by their quarrels and bickerings led all the European nations to believe that the contentious Colonies, like the Kilkenny cats, would end by destroying each other. Such a nation could command little respect, and the stronger powers were not slow to show their contempt for the United States. American vessels, coming back to port, would report that a British ship-of-war had halted them in mid-ocean, and seized American sailors as suspected British deserters. Other American ships, sailing full of hope from American ports, would never re-appear, and their fate would be a mystery, until, after many months, some sailor wandering home told of his ship's capture by a French privateer or Tripolitan war vessel. For years a debasing tribute was paid to the Bashaw of Tripoli, upon condition of his granting to American ships the privileges of the sea, that are the undoubted rights of every nation; yet even this compact was more often ignored than observed. Small wonder was it that the sage old statesman, Benjamin Franklin, on hearing a young man speak of the "glorious war for independence," responded gravely, "Say rather the war of the revolution: the war for independence is yet to be fought."

In the year 1789, the States, after much debate and bickering, finally ratified the document known as the Constitution of the United States.

While the work of the American Revolution was thus being completed, and a new nation was being formed, events were transpiring on the other side of the Atlantic that were destined to affect gravely the growth of the new nation. The oppressed peasantry and laborers of France, smarting under the wrongs of centuries, rose in a mighty wave, and swept away the nobles, their masters. The royal head of King Louis fell a prey to the remorseless spirit of the guillotine, and the reign of terror in Paris began. Soon the roll of the drum was heard in every European city, and the armies of every nation were on the march for France. England was foremost in the fray; and the people of the United States, seeing their old enemy at war with the country of Lafayette, fired by generous enthusiasm, were ready to rush to the aid of their old ally. But the wise prudence of their rulers restrained them; and for the next twenty years the United States were neutrals, while all the nations of Europe were plunged in war.

The first effect of this condition of affairs was most beneficial. As neutrals, the ships of the United States could trade with all the battling peoples; while any vessel flying a European flag was sure to find an enemy somewhere on the broad seas, and suffer confiscation. While France was giving her farmers and mechanics to follow in the glorious footsteps of Napoleon, the industrious citizens of the United States were reaping a rich reward in trade with the warring nation. The farmers received the highest prices for their grain, the ingenious mechanics of New England reaped fortunes from the sale of their wares, and the shipyards were filled to their greatest capacity with the graceful frames of fast clipper vessels destined for the trade with Europe. In 1780 the shipping of the United States was confined to a few coasting-vessels, and the American flag was seldom seen beyond the Atlantic. Fifteen years later, the white sails of American ships dotted every sea, and but few European ports did not show some trim clipper floating in the harbor, bearing at her peak the stars and stripes.

From Maine to Georgia the people were building ships, and manning them. The vast forests resounded with the strokes of the woodman's axe, getting out the timber; and the seaport towns were given over to shipwrights, who worked day and night at their craft. In New England there sprung up a race of hardy seamen. Boys of twelve or fourteen ran away

to sea, made a coasting voyage or two, and, after a voyage to some European port, became captains of ocean-going ships, — often before they were twenty years of age. The people of the coastwise towns of New England can tell of hundreds of such cases. There was "Nat" Palmer of Stonington, who shipped when a boy of fourteen, and, after four years' coasting, was made second mate of the brig "Herselias," bound around Cape Horn, for seals. On his first voyage the young mate distinguished himself by discovering the South Shetland Islands, guided by the vague hints of a rival sealer, who knew of the islands, and wished them preserved for his own trade, as the seals swarm there by the hundred thousands. The discovery of these islands, and the cargo of ten thousand skins brought home by the "Herselias," made young Palmer famous; and, at the age of twenty, he was put in command of a sloop, and sent to the South Seas again. One day he found his passage in the desired direction blocked by two long islands, with a narrow opening between them. To go around the islands would have been a long voyage; and the young captain headed his craft for the opening, but soon found himself on the rocks. Luckily, the vessel backed off, and the crew set about repairing damages. While thus engaged, the great, blunt head of a whale was seen in the narrow channel; and, after blowing a column of water high in the air, the monster swam lazily through the strait. "If a whale can go through that channel, I can," quoth "Cap'n Nat." And he forthwith did so. Quick of observation, and prompt of action, the sailors of the United States became the foremost seamen of the world, and guided their little vessels over every known sea.

But the growing commerce of the United States was destined to meet a series of checks, that seemed for a time likely to destroy it forever. England, jealous of the encroachments of the Americans upon the broad seas of which she had long called herself the mistress, began a series of outrages upon American ships, and, not content with acting in open hostility, incited the piratical rulers of Tripoli and Algiers to make war upon American shipping. In this volume it is not my purpose to tell of the means adopted by England to let the swarming ships of the Barbary pirates out of the Mediterranean Sea, to prey upon the vessels of the United States; nor do I intend to tell how, after peaceful arguments had been exhausted, Decatur and Preble, with a fleet of American vessels and

a handful of fighting jack-tars, crossed the ocean, and thrashed the pirates of the Mediterranean into subjection. That may well be left for future consideration, and this chapter devoted to a history of the acts of insolence and oppression on the part of England, that finally forced the United States to declare war against a power so vastly superior to them in wealth, population, and military and naval strength.

The first great and crying outrage, protested against by the statesmen, the newspapers, and the people of the United States, was the so-called right of search. By this was meant the right claimed by every British man-of-war to stop an American vessel on the high seas, muster her crew on the forecastle, and seize and carry away any sailor thought to be a native of Great Britain. This outrageous act was committed time and time again by the commanders of British frigates, who knew no easier way of filling up a short-handed crew than by stopping some passing vessel flying the stars and stripes, and taking from her the best-looking sailors of her crew. Hardly a week passed without the arrival of a ship at New York, New London, or any of the shipping towns of New England, bringing some such tale. The merchant-vessel, skimming lightly over the ocean, at peace with all the world, and with nothing to fear save the terrors of the storms, against which the sturdy mariners knew so well how to guard, would be suddenly halted by a shot from a frigate of a nation with whom the United States had no quarrel. A hail from the frigate told the American to come up into the wind, while a boat was sent aboard. Soon a long-boat filled with man-o'-war's men, and with a beardless young midshipman in the stern-sheets, came dancing over the water; and in a minute or two a lieutenant, the middy, and a few sailors clambered aboard the wondering merchantman. There was small ceremony about the proceedings then.

"Muster your men aft," quoth the midày peremptorily; "and you'd better be quick about it, too."

Perhaps the American captain protested, — they generally did, — and talked about the peace between the nations, and the protection of his flag; but his talk was usually of little avail.

"Get those man aft, and be quick about it," orders the British officer. "You've got deserters from his Majesty's service in your crew; and I'll have them. Do you want me to send the boat back for the marines?"

The American crew came aft unwillingly, grumbling, and cursing his Majesty's service under their breath, and formed a line before the boarding officer. That worthy whispered a minute or two with the boatswain and sailors who came aboard with him, and then, pointing out one man, boldly claimed him as a British subject. American captains declared that the man so chosen was generally the most ship-shape sailor aboard; and indeed it seemed but natural that the English, in filling out their crew, should choose the best. Sometimes the American captain went on board the British ship, to protest against so summary a draft upon his crew. In such a case he was usually received with courtesy by the commander, but never did he regain his kidnapped sailors. The commander trusted in every thing to his first lieutenant, who boarded the merchantman; and that officer was thus made, in the words of an English journalist, "at once accuser, witness, judge, and captor."

The men thus pressed were expected to serve with all the zeal and bravery of regularly enlisted sailors. The slightest sign of hesitation or unwillingness was met with blows. A pressed man who refused to serve was triced up, and lashed with the cat-o'-nine tails until his back was cut to ribbons, and the blood spurted at every blow. Few cared to endure such punishment twice. Yet the sailors taken from the American ships lost no opportunity for showing their desire to get out of the service into which they had been kidnapped. Desertions from ships lying near the coast were of weekly occurrence, although recaptured deserters were hanged summarily at the yard-arm. Sailors who found no chance to desert made piteous appeals to the American consuls in the ports at which they stopped, or wrote letters to their friends at home, begging that something should be done to release them from their enforced service. It was not the severity of man-o'-war discipline that so troubled the poor fellows: many of them were old man-o'-war's men, and all would have been glad of berths in the United States navy; but the sight of the red flag of Great Britain waving above their heads, and the thought that they were serving a nation with which their country had just fought a bloody war, were intolerable.

One "pressed man," on a British ship lying in the West Indies, managed to write the following letter to a newspaper editor in New York, and, after much planning, succeeded in mailing it.

PORT ROYAL, JAMAICA, June 30, 1811.

MR. SNOWDEN, — I hope you will be so good as to publish these few lines. I, Edwin Bouldin, was impressed out of the barque "Columbus" of Elizabeth City, and was carried on board his Britannic Majesty's brig "Rhodian," in Montego Bay, commanded by Capt. Mowbary. He told me my protection was of no consequence, and he would have me whether or not. I was born in Baltimore, and served my time with Messrs. Smith & Buchanan. I hope my friends will do something for me to get my clearance; for I do not like to serve any other country but my own, which I am willing to serve. I am now captain of the forecastle, and stationed captain of a gun in the waist. I am treated very ill, because I will not enter. They request of me to go on board my country's ships to list men, which I refused to do, and was threatened to be punished for it.

I remain a true citizen of the United States

EDWIN BOULDIN.

Pathetic letters such as this appear often in the columns of the newspapers published in the early part of this century, and are usually accompanied by petitions from the relatives and friends of the pressed man, begging that Congress take some action to secure American sailors from such outrages. But year after year the practice went on, and higher and higher grew the enmity between England and the United States. Among the sailors who suffered impressment at the hands of the British were many who afterward in the naval battles of the ensuing war won ample revenge from the nation that had so abused their liberties.

Most prominent of all these men was David Porter, who, from the humble station of a cabin boy on his father's ship in 1796, rose in twenty years to be commodore in the United States navy. The name of Porter is one famous in the naval annals of the United States; and probably there never existed a family in which the love for the life of a fighting jack-tar was so strong as among these representative American sailors. David Porter, sen., and Samuel Porter served the American Colonies dashingly upon the sea in the Revolution. Of David Porter, jun., we shall have much to say in this volume. Of his children the eldest, William D., rose to the post of commodore, United States navy, and died of wounds received in the civil war; Henry O. Porter was first lieutenant of the "Hatteras" when she sunk before the fire of the Confederate ship "Alabama;" Thomas Porter served in the Mexican navy; Hambleton Porter

died of yellow-fever while a midshipman in the United States navy; Lieut. Theodoric Porter, U.S.A., was the first officer killed in the Mexican war; and Admiral David D. Porter, U.S.N., by virtue of his exploits on blue water and in the ditches and bayous back of Vicksburg during the civil war, now stands at the head of living naval officers.

But to return to David Porter. He was sixteen years old, when, in 1796, his father, having obtained command of a vessel in the West India trade, determined to take the lad to sea, that he might learn the profession of his ancestors. It was hardly a favorable time to inspire an independent boy with admiration for the life of an American merchant sailor. The United States had no navy to protect its merchant ships; and the British cruisers that scoured the ocean felt little hesitation about boarding the ships of the infant nation, and kidnapping such sailors as they might desire. Of this young Porter soon had evidence. While his ship, the "Eliza," was lying in the port of Jeremie in San Domingo, a British frigate came into the harbor, and dropped anchor near by. One morning the lookout on the "Eliza" saw a boat, manned by armed men, put off from the frigate, and steer for the American merchantman. The movement was quickly reported to Capt. Porter, who was too old a seaman not to know what it portended, and too plucky an American to submit willingly to any indignity. His preparations were quickly made; and by the time the frigate's boat came alongside, the crew of the "Eliza" were armed and ready to rush to the deck at the first alarm. Capt. Porter with his officers and son stood on the quarterdeck, and awaited with great dignity the arrival of the boat. Soon the British came alongside; and an officer in the stern-sheets announced that he was about to board the "Eliza," and demanded to search the vessels for deserters from the British service.

Capt. Porter replied that his was an American ship, and the British might board at their peril; for he was armed, and would resist the boarders to the last extremity. A great laugh went up from the boat alongside. A Yankee merchantman to resist British sailors, indeed! And the officer, without more ado, ordered his men to board. Hardly had the order passed his lips, than Porter's clear voice rang out, "Repel boarders!" and the crew of the "Eliza," armed with pikes and muskets, rushed upon their assailants, and drove them into the sea. Young Porter was not behind-

hand in the fight, but lent his boyish aid to the vindication of American sailors' rights. One man was shot down by his side; and Porter received his first baptism of blood in this encounter, which thus early rooted in his mind a detestation for the arrogance of the British, and a determination to devote his life to the cause of his seafaring countrymen.

On his second voyage, a year later, young Porter was destined to experience still further the hardships and ignominy which American sailors only too often encountered at the hands of the British. Once again the boy, now a first officer, was walking the deck of his vessel in a San Domingo port, when a boat's-crew from a British frigate came on board on the usual errand of impressment. This time the sturdy, independent spirit of the elder Porter was absent; and the captain of the American vessel basely permitted a portion of his crew, among whom was Porter, to be carried aboard the frigate, where they were to be kept until they agreed to enlist. Loaded with irons, they were thrust into "the brig," or guard-room of the frigate; but, though the case seemed hopeless, Porter gallantly refused to enter the king's service, and ceaselessly exhorted his comrades to stand firm against the commands of the British. Days passed, and still the frigate's crew was in no wise increased from among the obstinate Americans. The British captain lost patience, and commanded that all the prisoners be brought out on deck, triced up, and publicly flogged with the cat-of-nine tails, for "the bad example they set the crew of his Majesty's ship." The order was duly put into execution. The prisoners, still ironed, were brought up under a heavy guard, and taken to the gratings; but when young Porter reached the deck, and saw the ignominious punishment in store for him, he fought desperately with his guards, and, finally breaking away, ran below, and hid in some corner of the hold, from which the most careful search failed to dislodge him. The captain finally gave orders to leave him alone, saying, "He'll come out fast enough when he gets hungry." But the lad did not wait for hunger to drive him from his hiding-place. That very night he came from the hold, crawled stealthily across the deck, and dropped into the water, regardless of the sharks that abound in those tropic seas. A short swim took him to a Danish vessel, by which he was carried across the Atlantic. Only after many months of voyaging as a common sailor did the lad succeed in working his way back to his home.

Even this experience could not deter the young seaman from again seeking employment upon the billowy main, and for the third time he shipped upon an American merchantman. Again his course lay toward the West Indies, and again he was intercepted by the inevitable man-of-war. This time he was not so fortunate as to escape until after a month or more of captivity, during which time he was treated with the greatest cruelty on account of his persistent refusal to serve under any flag save that of his own country. At last he made his escape, and reached home. By this time he was naturally somewhat disgusted with the life of a sailor on an American merchant-vessel; and he cast about for an appointment to the navy, which he soon received. It is impossible to doubt that his three adventures with the British press-gang had much to do with the ardor and bravery with which in later days the young sailor, then elevated to the highest ranks, did battle with the enemies of his country. When, at the close of the War of 1812, the veteran naval officer looked back upon his record during that conflict, he could point to one captured British man-of-war and scores of captured British merchantmen as the measure of his retaliation for the wrongs done him as a defenceless American sailor-boy.

Oliver Hazard Perry, of whose famous victory over the British on Lake Erie we shall speak later, also was brought into conflict with the British in the days of the "right of search." His father, Christopher Raymond Perry, in command of the United States ship "Gen. Greene," was escorting an American brig freighted with a valuable cargo. Near Gibraltar they were sighted by a British man-of-war, which bore down quickly upon the two ships. Perry was an old and cautious naval officer; and, though peace reigned between his country and Great Britain, he no sooner saw an armed vessel approaching, than he put his vessel in trim for action, and sent the crew to the guns. Nearer and nearer came the great English man-o'-war; and, as she came within range, a puff of smoke burst from her bow-port, and a ball skipped along the water before Perry's unarmed convoy, conveying a forcible invitation to heave to. Perry at once made signal to his convoy to pay no regard to the Englishman; and, setting the American flag, the two ships continued on their way. But at this moment the breeze died away, and all three ships lay becalmed within easy range of each other. The British captain was not slow to take advantage of this; and a boat soon

put off from his ship, and made for the American brig. This move Perry promptly checked by a shot from the "Gen. Greene," which so narrowly missed the boat that the crew thought it well to run alongside the American man-o'-war, and arrange the matter peaceably. As the boat came alongside the "Gen. Greene," the gangway was manned, and the British officer escorted with the greatest formality to Perry's presence.

He at once stated his purpose in attempting to board the merchantman; claiming that, by virtue of the right of search, he was entitled to visit the brig, and examine into the nationality of her crew.

"I deny the existence of any right, on the part of British vessels, to search any American vessel, except with the consent of the American commander," responded Perry; "and my shot was intended to warn you that you had received no such permission."

By this time the British vessel had come within hailing distance of the "Gen. Greene;" and the captain demanded why his boat had been fired upon, and was now detained. Perry responded in the same words with which he had answered the boarding-officer.

"It's a most surprising thing," shouted the Englishman, losing his temper, "if a British seventy-four-gun ship cannot search a pitiful little Yankee merchantman."

"By Heaven!" responded Perry. "If you were a ship of the first rate, you should not do it, to the dishonor of my flag." And in an instant the ports of the "Gen. Greene" were triced up, and the British captain saw that his adversary was prepared for battle. After a moment's thought, he abandoned all attempts at violence, and sent a courteous letter to Perry, begging leave to visit the brig in search of British deserters, which request Perry as courteously granted.

To this list of American seamen who suffered indignities at the hands of the British, and afterwards won reparation from their enemies in the War of 1812, may be added the name of Joshua Barney. Few Americans have given to their country a longer service or more efficient aid than he. In the little Colonial navy of the Revolution, he held high rank, and won the plaudits of older sailors. At the close of the Revolution, he served for a time in the merchant-marine; then entered the naval service of France, and, at the first news of war between England and America, returned to his country, to enlist under the stars and stripes. It was

while he was in command of a merchantman that he was brought into collision with the British in a way that well might make the doughty old sea-dog doubt if the Revolutionary days, when he suffered in the noisome confines of Mill Prison, had not come again.

It was in the summer of 1793, that the good ship "Sampson," two days out from Cape François, West Indies, was slowly making her way northward, over the tropic seas, and under the glaring rays of the summer sun of the torrid zone. Capt. Barney and his crew were ever on the watch for danger; for, in addition to the hurricanes and typhoons common to the equatorial latitudes, much was to be feared from the lawless British privateers that then swarmed in the West Indies and Bermudas. That the "Sampson" was under the flag of a neutral power, was but little protection; for the commanders of the semi-piratical craft cared little for international law or for justice. War was raging between France and England; and a mere suspicion of traffic with French colonies was enough, in the eyes of these worthies, to condemn a vessel of any nationality.

Knowing his danger, Capt. Barney strove to avoid the localities frequented by the privateers, but to no avail One bright morning, the lookout reported three sail in sight from the masthead, and in a few hours Barney found himself hemmed in by privateers. Three officers boarded him, and began a rigid examination of the cargo and papers. Two finally expressed themselves as satisfied of the neutral character of the vessel; but the third exclaimed that he had discovered in the cabin an iron chest, full of money, which surely proved that the "Sampson" had something to do with the French, for "no blasted Yankee ever had iron chests or dollars on board his vessel!" Such conclusive proof as this could not be overlooked by the sapient privateers; and, after a little consultation, they informed Capt. Barney that they would let the ship go, if the money were given to them. As it amounted to eighteen thousand dollars, Capt. Barney looked upon this demand as nothing short of robbery, and indignantly refused to consider it; whereupon his captors took from the "Sampson" all her crew except the carpenter, boatswain, and cook, sent a prize-crew aboard, and ordered that she be taken to New Providence, a British naval station. The privateers were soon hull down on the horizon; and Barney found himself a prisoner on his own ship, exposed to ceaseless insolence from the British prize-master.

Several days passed, as the "Sampson" lay becalmed in the tropics. Barney, though too old a sailor to be cast down by misfortune, nevertheless chafed under his situation. From prize-master and prize-crew he received nothing but scurrilous epithets; and the oft-repeated murmurs of "Rebel rascal!" "Yankee traitor!" "Blow out his brains!" and "Throw him overboard!" made it hard for him to believe the Revolution over, and the United States and England at peace. Even while they thus abused the captain, the rogues were feasting upon his provisions and drinking his wines; and only his firm refusal to give up his keys prevented their rifling his iron chest, and filling their pockets with his dollars. At last he began to feel that his life was no longer safe in the hands of his captors; and, though he had by him but three men of his original crew, he determined to attempt to recapture the ship.

One evening the captain managed to catch a few minutes' conversation with the carpenter and boatswain of his own crew, and broached to them the project for a recapture. No argument was needed to induce these bold men to embark in the perilous enterprise. Indeed, from the very moment of the capture, they must have cherished some such purpose; for each had hidden away in his bunk a gun and bayonet. Barney, on his part, had secreted a small brass blunderbuss and a broad-sword; and with this meagre armament the three determined to take the ship from its captors.

The success of the project then depended upon a favorable opportunity, and the three conspirators watched eagerly for the decisive moment to arrive. At last there came a day so squally that all the prize-crew were kept busy with the sails all the morning. Much exhausted, the sailors sat down to their dinner on the forecastle at noon, while the three British officers spread their mess amidships. Barney saw that the moment had arrived; and, giving the signal to his men, the plotters went below for their weapons. Barney was the first to re-appear, — the blunderbuss, loaded and cocked, in his hand, and the naked cutlass under his arm. Hardly had he stepped on deck when one of the officers saw him, and, throwing down dishes and dinner, sprang at the American and grappled with him. Barney struggled violently, and soon managing to get the blunderbuss against his enemy's shoulder, fired it, filling the wretch's arm and side with buckshot. Freed from his adversary, the

gallant captain cut down with a blow of his cutlass the second prize officer, who was advancing upon him; and the third, seeing his two companions lying, drenched with blood, upon the deck, ran below. In the mean time the crew, startled from their dinner by the report of the blunderbuss, had rushed below for their weapons; but the last man had hardly dived down the hatchway when the wily carpenter and boatswain rushed forward, clapped on the hatches, and in a trice had the British sailors nicely cooped up in the forecastle. The two wounded officers were quickly cared for, and the unhurt fugitive secured; and Barney found himself again in control of the ship.

The victors then held a consultation as to their future action. They controlled the ship, it was true; but what were three men to do with a full-rigged ship on the stormy Atlantic? Clearly they must get aid from their captives, or all might go to the bottom together. Accordingly the three, with loaded weapons, went forward, and standing at the hatchway, proposed terms to the imprisoned sailors below. Capt. Barney acted as spokesman.

"You shall be released from confinement," cried he to the captives, "and may now come on deck one at a time, each one bringing his weapons with him."

The hatches were then thrown back, and the carpenter and boatswain stood with cutlasses and muskets ready to cut down the first who should make an offensive movement. The British saw the preparations for their reception, and came up one at a time as ordered. As each came up, his arms were seized and thrown overboard, and a gruff order given for him to go forward. Before long the crew, deprived of all means of resistance, were gathered on the forecastle. Barney then retired to the quarter-deck, and ordered that the crew be mustered before him.

"You are now my prisoners," said he; "and I have not only the power, but the right, to hang every man jack of you. You seized this vessel without any just cause, and simply because you were the stronger; and you have further used that strength to abuse and ill-treat me and waste my property. I do not propose to execute you, but will give you the choice of two alternatives. You may either stay with me and work this ship to Baltimore, there to be discharged with wages; or I will give you a small boat with provisions, and set you adrift to shift for your-

selves. One condition I attach to the first alternative. If one of you is seen talking with his former officers, or if one man steps abaft the mainmast, he shall be instantly shot."

The crew wasted no time in deliberation, but decided to stay with the ship, and at once went forward on duty. Then began a fortnight

BARNEY REGAINS HIS SHIP.

of ceaseless watchfulness and grave anxiety for Capt. Barney. At night he never closed his eyes, but took his sleep by day in an armchair on deck, his blunderbuss and cutlass by his side, and a sentinel ready to awaken him at the slightest alarm. At last, however, he brought his ship safely to Baltimore, and discharged his crew. But the memory of

that month of violence remained with him; and we shall hear of him again as a brave sailor in the service of the United States, and an uncompromising foe to England.

Among the most adventurous of American merchant seamen in the days following the Revolution was Capt. Thomas Macdonough. Like others of his class, his daring and ability as a navigator gained him a commission in the very small American navy of that time. On one occasion the United States ship "Siren," of which he was first lieutenant, was lying at anchor in the harbor of Gibraltar, surrounded by a number of merchantmen, from the peak of one of which floated the stars and stripes. While pacing the deck one bright afternoon, Macdonough observed a boat manned with armed men put off from a British man-of-war that rode at anchor a mile away. At once his suspicions were aroused, and with a strong glass he watched the movements of the British. As he had expected, the boat steered straight for the American merchantman; and through his glass Macdonough could see the boarders scramble over the bulwarks of the vessel, and soon thereafter return to their boat, taking with them a man dressed in the garb of a merchant seaman, and tightly bound.

The captain of the "Siren" was on shore; and Macdonough, as the officer in command, determined that so audacious an impressment should not succeed under the guns of an American war-vessel, small though she might be.

"Clear away the long-boat," he shouted; and the boat quickly was lowered to the water, and a dozen jackies grasped the oars. Macdonough sprung into the stern-sheets, and grasped the tiller.

"Let fall! Give way! Pull hard, men!" He gave the orders in quick succession, and laid his course straight for the British boat, which was soon overtaken He laid his boat alongside the British cutter, and demanded that the captive be given up. The English officer began to protest, but Macdonough cut his protests short.

"You have no right to that man. He is an American sailor. — Tumble in here, my man."

The pressed man, delighted with the prospect of rescue, sprang into the American boat; and before the British officer had recovered from his amazement sufficiently to offer resistance, the blue-jackets were pulling

away toward the "Siren," with the long, swinging, man-o'-war stroke. When he reached his vessel, Macdonough retired to his cabin to await further developments, which were not long in appearing.

"Boat from the British frigate heading for the ship, sir," reported the officer of the deck, in a few minutes.

"Very good, sir. Have the gangway manned," returned the lieutenant.

The boat was soon alongside; and the British captain, white with rage, leaped to the gangway, and was shown to Lieut. Macdonough's cabin.

"How dare you take a man from a boat of his Majesty's ship, sir?" was his salutation.

"'Dare' is not a word to be spoken to an officer of the United States navy," responded Macdonough. "As for the man, he is a citizen of the United States; and I propose to protect him, at all hazards."

"I'll bring my frigate alongside, and sink your beggarly little craft," shouted the visitor, with a volley of oaths.

"That you may do," responded the American; "but while she swims the man you shall not have."

"You are a hair-brained young fellow, and will repent this rashness," cried the irate Briton. "Do you mean to say, that, if I had been in that boat, you would have dared to commit such an act?"

"I should have made the attempt, sir, at all hazards."

"What, sir!" shouted the captain, greatly enraged, "would you venture to interfere, if I should now impress men from that brig?"

"You have but to try it, sir," was the pithy response. And the British captain returned to his frigate, vowing all sorts of vengeance, but nevertheless did not again annoy the American ship.

While the popular clamor against the hateful right of search was still at its height in America, Great Britain unwisely added yet another outrage to the already long list of grievances complained of by the Americans. Notwithstanding the danger of Barbary pirates and British impressment, the merchants of the United States were carrying on a thriving trade with France. England, then at war with the great Napoleon, looked upon this commerce at first with disfavor, and finally with such intense hatred that she determined to put an end to it altogether. Accordingly, she issued the celebrated "Orders in Council," forbidding all traffic with

French ports. For such action the imperious nation had no authority by any principle of international law. Her blockade of the French ports was very imperfect, and easily evaded. It is a perfectly well-established principle of the common law of nations that a blockade, to be legal, must be complete and effective; otherwise, it is known as a "paper blockade," and neutral vessels are justified in attempting to evade it. Instead of posting blockading vessels at the entrances of French ports, to warn off all vessels, Great Britain contented herself with licensing hordes of privateers, that roamed the seas and snapped up vessels with little regard to law or justice. Hundreds of American vessels were thus captured; for our trade with France and the French West Indian colonies at that time was of vast proportions. The ocean soon became so infested with privateers that every American merchantman carried cannon, and an array of small-arms that would have done credit to a sloop-of-war. The New England sailors became able naval fighters, as well as experienced seamen; for a man shipping for a voyage knew well that, in addition to battling with the angry elements, he might be required to sight truly the great "long Tom," or beat back piratical boarders at the muzzle of the muskets. But even these heroic remedies could not save many a good ship.

Occurrences such as these fanned into flaming fury the smouldering fires of the American hatred for Great Britain. The people saw their old oppressor and enemy engaged in war with their old ally France, and the popular cry went up for a union of France and the United States against England. Happily, the statesmen of the time — Washington, Hamilton, and Jay — were too firm of purpose, and too clear-sighted, to be led away by popular clamor; and they wisely kept the United States Government in a position of neutrality between the two nations. Deep and loud were the murmurs of the people at this action. Could true-hearted Americans desert their friends in such a manner? Never! And so, whatever might be the policy of the rulers, the many-headed people welcomed French ambassadors, fêted the officers of visiting men-of-war, and hung the tri-color and the stars and stripes side by side on all public holidays.

It was in 1795, while the popular affection for France was at its height, that a merchant-vessel flying the British flag sailed into Boston Harbor, and made fast to the Long Wharf. Under her stern appeared

the legend, "The Betsy of St. Croix;" her decks were littered with poultry and domestic animals, her cordage flapped loosely in the breeze, and every thing about her bespoke the merchant-vessel. Her captain, being hailed by the dock-loafers, and made the victim of the proverbial Yankee inquisitiveness, stated that he had just come from the West Indies with a load of lignum-vitæ, pineapples, and hides, which he hoped to sell in Boston. The self-constituted investigating committee seemed satisfied, and the captain strolled on into the city.

But the French consul at Boston was far from satisfied, and he took care to let his suspicions become generally known. "That innocent-looking merchantman is a British privateer," quoth he; "and it's a shame to harbor her in the good port of Boston, amid French-loving people." The consul's words spread like wildfire; and his suspicions soon passed for facts, without any supporting proof. No one knows who was the writer, or who the printer; but in a few hours the people upon the streets had thrust into their hands the following handbill:—

THIS NIGHT

Will be performed at the steps bottom of Long Wharf

A COMEDY

of stripping the

BERMUDIAN PRIVATEER.

CITIZENS. Remember there have been near three hundred of our American vessels taken by these Bermudians, and have received the most barbarous treatment from those Damn'd PIRATES!!!

Now, Americans, if you feel the spirit of resentment or revenge kindling in your hearts, let us be united in the cause.

This was enough to rouse the turbulent people of Boston to action. They well remembered the winter's night, twenty-two years before, when their harbor was the scene of the first protest against the oppression of

Great Britain. Then they threw overboard the tea, and spared the ships; this time ship and cargo alike should be destroyed. When night fell, small bodies of men could be seen marching down to the wharfs, through the narrow, crooked streets of the old town. Before eight o'clock Long Wharf was crowded with an angry mob. On the deck of the threatened vessel stood the captain, arguing and pleading with the crowd, and at times pointing to the scarlet flag above his head, and threatening his assailants with the wrath of mighty England. Argument, entreaty, and threats proved unavailing; and the crowd, gaining courage with numbers, rushed upon the vessel, and ordered captain and crew ashore. Leaving the scene, the captain rushed wildly into the city in search of the British consul; and, in his absence, the mob began to search his ship. An active and careful search soon brought to light in an out-of-the-way corner of the hold two swivel-guns, two three-pounders, forty charges of shot, fifteen pounds of powder, and eight muskets. All was piled upon the deck, and pointed out to the captain on his return, amid frantic yells from the enraged populace. He solemnly protested that the ordnance was only intended for purposes of defence against the pirates that infested the Bermudas. But the case was already judged. The people laughed at the captain's declarations; and in a few minutes the "Betsy," a mass of flame, was drifting across the harbor to the Charlestown beach. There she blazed away, while the crowd watched the bonfire from the dock, until the last timbers of the ship fell with a hiss into the black waters, and all was dark again.

Popular sympathy is at best but an unstable sentiment, and so it proved with this unreasoning affection of the American people for France. Firmly the American authorities held to their policy of neutrality, refusing to be influenced in the slightest degree by the popular clamor of the people for an alliance with France. Then the French sympathizers made their fatal error. In the presidential chair of the United States sat Washington, the hero of the Revolution. Rashly the French minister and his following began an onslaught upon this great and wise man, because of his firm determination to keep the United States neutral. They accused him of being an "aristocrat;" of wishing to found an hereditary monarchy, with himself at the head. No epithet was too vile for them to apply to him: "liar" and "traitor" were terms freely applied to him whom we

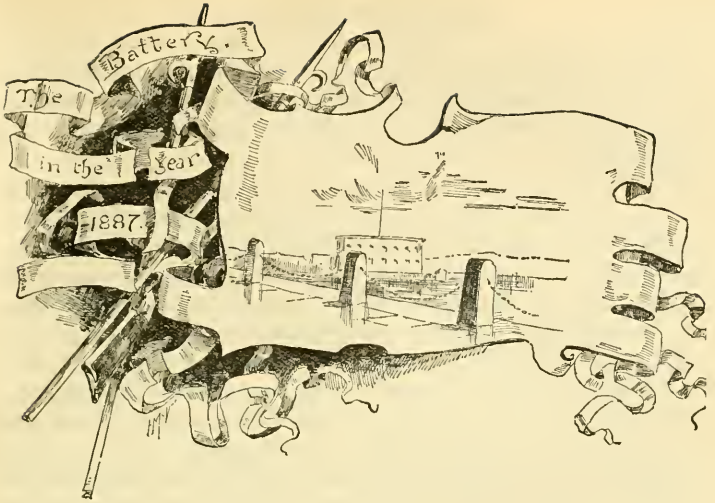
regard as the veritable founder of our free Republic. Such intemperate and unreasoning malice as this had a very different effect from what was intended by the French sympathizers, or Republicans as the party was then termed. The party supporting the President gained strength and influence, even while the actions of Napoleon and the French Chamber of Deputies were giving American seamen the same grounds of complaint as those which Great Britain had so long forced upon them.

It was during the last year of the administration of Washington, that the French Directory issued secret orders to the commanders of all French men-of-war, directing them to treat neutral vessels in the same manner as they had suffered the English to treat them. The cunning intent of this order is apparent by its wording: "Treat American vessels as they suffer themselves to be treated by the British." What course does that leave open to the Americans, save to resist the British, thereby become involved in a war, and so aid France? But there was one other alternative; and, much to the surprise and chagrin of the French, the Americans adopted it. And the only effect of the diplomatic secret order was to embroil France in a naval war with the United States.

The condition of American commerce, after the promulgation of the French decree, became deplorable indeed. A merchant-vessel flying the American flag was never safe unless under the guns of an American war-vessel; and the reduction of the navy had made these few indeed. Should the brig "Nancy" or "Sarah Jane" put out from the little port of Salem or New London, she was certain to be overhauled by some British frigate, whose boarding officer would pick from the brig's crew a few able sailors, and leave her to make her way short-handed as best she might. Next would come along some French frigate or privateer, — some "Terreur," "Incroyable," or "Insurgente," — whose astute officers would quickly notice the gaps in the American crew, and, finding out that the brig had been boarded by the English, would declare her a prize for having given aid to the enemies of *la belle France*. Should the little brig be so fortunate as to escape the civilized belligerents, there were still the pirates of Tripoli, the picaroons of the French West Indies, and the unauthorized and irresponsible pirates, who, with forged commissions and flying the Spanish or Portuguese colors, ravaged the seas in all directions. The career of an American merchantman at that time is admirably told

by our great novelist Fenimore Cooper in his sea-tale of "Miles Wallingford." The fate of the good brig "Dawn" was the fate of too many an American vessel in those turbulent times; and the wondrous literary art with which the novelist has expanded the meagre records of the times into an historical novel of surpassing interest makes an acquaintance with the book essential to a proper knowledge of American naval history.

The first act of retaliation on the part of the United States was the embargo ordered by Congress, which prohibited any vessel from leaving American ports. This action had two effects. It quickly brought about great distress in European countries, which even then relied much on the United States for food. This was the chief object of the embargo. The second effect was inevitable. The sudden check upon all foreign commerce plunged business in all parts of the United States into stagnation. Sailors out of work thronged the streets of the seaport towns. Farmers trudged weary miles beside their ox-teams, only to find, when they had hauled their produce to town, that there was no market for it. Along the docks the ships lay idly tugging at their cables, or stranded on the flats as the tide went out. Merchants discharged their clerks, and great warehouses were locked up and deserted. For nearly a year the ports were closed, and commerce thus languished. Then Congress substituted for the embargo the Non-intercourse Act, which simply prohibited commerce with France and England; and again the American flag appeared upon the ocean. But the two warring nations had learned neither wisdom nor justice, and began again their depredations upon the unoffending Americans. Envoys were sent to France to protest against the outrageous action of that nation; but they were told that no audience could be granted them, unless they paid into the French treasury two hundred and forty thousand dollars. This last insult was too great. The envoys returned home, told of their treatment, and the war party in the United States rallied to the defence of their nation's honor, shouting Pinckney's noble sentiment, "*Millions for defence, but not one cent for tribute.*"




## CHAPTER II.

WAR WITH FRANCE. — THE BUILDING OF A NAVY. — FIRST SUCCESS FOR THE AMERICANS. — CUTTING OUT THE "SANDWICH." — THE "CONSTELLATION" AND "L'INSURGENTE." — THE "CONSTELLATION" AND "LA VENGEANCE."

WHILE France and England were waging a desperate and bloody war, the United States was like a shuttlecock, being struck repeatedly by the diplomatic battledores of each nation. Between the British "Orders in Council" and the French "Milan Decree," American commerce was in a fair way of being obliterated. To declare war against both nations, would have been absurd in so young a people; and for months, and even years, the fierce contests of political parties in the United States made a declaration of war against either aggressor impracticable. Now the Franco-maniacs were in the ascendency, and the country rang with praises of France, — the nation which had cast off aristocrats, and, like America, was devoted to republican principles; the nation which had aided the Colonies in their war for freedom. What though a French privateer did occasionally seize an American ship? The Americans alone were to blame for that; for was

not their attitude toward England, their natural foe, enough to inflame the French? And were not the British aggressions more oppressive than those of France? War there must be, but let it be declared against the hated British.

Such were the sentiments of the French sympathizers, or Democrats as they were then termed in political parlance. But the English sympathizers, or Federalists, held very different opinions. They made no attempt to excuse the offensive attitude assumed by England, but claimed that so soon as her war with France was over she would admit the injustice of her actions, and make due reparation for the injuries she had heaped upon American commerce. But they pointed out that for one vessel taken by England, ten were seized by French privateers, or piratical vessels of nondescript nationality, but bearing French papers. As for France loving republican principles, her republicanism was founded upon blood and the guillotine. She was no longer the nation that had aided the struggling Colonies. She was the nation that had foully murdered the kind king who had lent that aid two decades before. Besides these arguments, the Federalists did not scruple to hint, that, in a second war with England, the United States might lose the independence so recently won, while the navy of France was not so greatly to be dreaded.

Indeed, the American people of that day might well be excused for lethargy in resenting the insults of any first-class naval power. It is not too strong a statement, to say that at this time, when the need was greatest, the United States had no navy. At the close of the Revolution, the navy had been disbanded, the ships sold, and the officers dispersed among the vessels of the merchant marine. This fact alone is enough to account for the depredations of French, English, Portuguese, Tripolitans, and the hordes of pirates without a country. Is there no lesson in this? From this lesson of history cannot we deduce the rule that a nation with 6,000 miles of sea-coast, a republic hated by all monarchies, must maintain its sea-power if it would maintain its honor? The naval regeneration begun in 1893 ought not to be checked until the United States ranks next to Great Britain as a naval power.

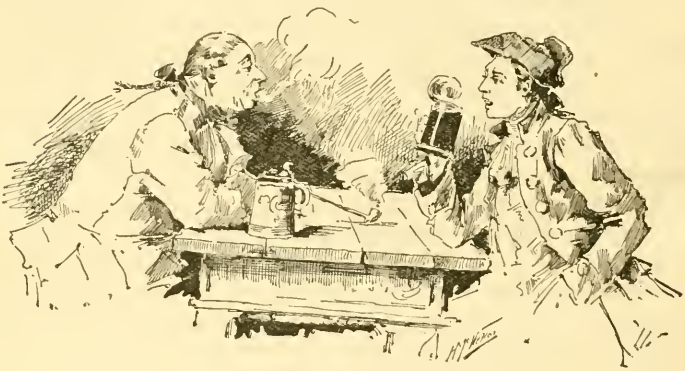
But the depredations of the enemies of American commerce at last reached such a point that Congress could no longer overlook the necessity for an American navy. In March, 1794, Congress, after listening to

a message from the President detailing the depredations of the Algerines, passed an Act authorizing the construction or purchase of six frigates, or an equivalent naval force. This was the beginning of the present United States navy; for some of the frigates built under that law are still afloat, although no longer exposed to the rude shocks of battle or the still more violent onslaughts of the mighty ocean.

In accordance with the law, the frames of six frigates were quickly laid upon the stocks at six different ship-yards; and even while the ribs were yet uncovered, commanders were selected for the unbuilt ships. The names of ships and officers alike are famous in American annals, and may well be mentioned here. The "Constitution," "President," "United States," "Chesapeake," "Constellation," and "Congress" were the vessels begun at this time; and the rolls of no navy of the world ever bore six more famous names. The captains chosen were John Barry, Samuel Nicholson, Silas Talbot, Joshua Barney, Richard Dale, and Thomas Truxton. Of these, all save Truxton had served the Colonies in the Revolution. Barney narrowly escaped being totally disowned by his country, because while holding a commission in the French navy he had once accidentally hoisted the American flag upside down. A cry went up from his enemies, that it was an intentional insult to the country; but his friends, with justice, pleaded that the flag had been wet, and a sailor, running it up to dry, had thus carelessly inverted it.

In the mean time the building of the ships went merrily on, until, when they were nearly finished, a disgraceful treaty was made with Algiers, and work on the new navy was neglected, and three of the unfinished ships sold. But in 1797 the French depredations became so unbearable that work was hastened; and cities and towns, not satisfied with the three frigates provided for, began collecting subscriptions for the purchase of ships, to be presented to the Government. The first of the frigates building by the Government to reach the water was the "United States." As the first vessel built by the United States under the Constitution, her launch was an event to be celebrated. At noon on the bright May afternoon chosen, the streets of Philadelphia leading to the ship-yard, where the hull of the great frigate lay upon the stocks, were thronged with holiday-making people. The sun had hardly risen,

when anxious spectators began to seize upon the best points of observation about the ship-yard. The hour of the launch was set at one P.M.; and for hours before the crowd of watchers sung patriotic songs, cheered for Congress and the new navy, and anxiously debated the chances of a successful launch. The river was covered with pleasure-craft, decked with flags, and bright with the gay dresses of ladies. The great frigate, too, was a mass of bunting from stem to stern. At one precisely, the blows of many hammers were heard knocking out the blocks; and, after a moment's trembling pause, the first United States frigate glided swiftly



TOASTING THE WOODEN WALLS OF COLUMBIA.

into the water, and, after a graceful dip, rode buoyantly on the placid surface of the Delaware.

While the ships were building, the war-feeling against France was steadily growing, and the enthusiasm of the people over the infant navy knew no bounds. Toasts to the "wooden walls of Columbia," and the "rising navy of America," were drunk with cheers at stately public banquets, and by bands of jolly roisterers at tap-houses. The patriotic song writer invaded the columns of the newspapers; and, as these could not afford space for all the poetic effusions, they were printed on broadsides, and hawked about the streets. At Harvard College the students made the chapel walls ring with the ode written by Joseph Story: —

"Shall Gallia's clan our coast invade,
With hellish outrage scourge the main,
Insult our nation's neutral trade,
And we not dare our rights maintain?
Rise, united Harvard's band,
Rise, the bulwark of our land."

Admirable as may be the patriotism of this ode, the poetry is not above criticism; but it is classic in comparison with many others. The following stanza and chorus will show the character of one of the most popular street-songs of the day:—

"Americans, then fly to arms,
And learn the way to use 'em.
If each man fights to 'fend his rights,
The French can't long abuse 'em.

Yankee Doodle (mind the tune),
Yankee Doodle Dandy;
For the French there's trouble brewin':
We'll spank 'em, hand and handy."

From Maine to Georgia the mania for writing such doggerel spread with a rapidity only equalled by the avidity with which the people seized upon the songs, and sung them. A complete collection of these remarkable efforts of poetic art would form an amusing volume, and from it alone a history of political movements in the United States might be written. That even such wretched doggerel had its effect upon popular sentiment, cannot be doubted; for has it not been said, "I care not who makes the laws of a nation, let me but write its songs"?

But the manifestation of the growing ill-feeling towards France was not confined to poor but harmless poetizing. The first open rupture took place at Savannah. In the port of that city were lying two long, rakish schooners flying the French tricolor. Their decks were crowded with men, whose rough actions and brutal countenances showed them to be no respecters of law or order. It did not need the rows of cannon protruding from the ports, nor the carefully covered "long Toms" amid-

ships, to indicate to the good people of Savannah that their harbor sheltered two French privateers. Among the seafaring people of the city, the sight of these two vessels aroused the greatest anger. Were they not representatives of the nation whose ships were seizing and burning American vessels in the West Indies almost daily? Perhaps these very vessels were then fresh from an action with some American ship. Who could tell that the holds of the privateers did not at that very minute contain the best part of the cargo of some captured American vessel? Probably the last shot fired from that "long Tom" had crashed into the side of some little brig flying the stars and stripes, and perhaps ended the career of many an American sailor. From suspicions and conjectures, positive statements soon grew. It was whispered about that the two privateers had recently plundered and burned a Yankee ship returning from the West Indies with a goodly store of specie in exchange for her cargo. Those cut-throat-looking Frenchmen were even then stained with the blood of true Americans. The money they threw on the bars of water-side dram-shops, in exchange for the vile rum which was the worst enemy of too many a good jack-tar, was looked upon with suspicion. "What Yankee's pockets did Johnny Crapaud pick to get all that money?" growled the American sailors.

The Frenchmen were not slow in discovering the dislike manifested by the people of Savannah; and like true soldiers of fortune, as they were, they did nothing to make friends of their enemies. They came ashore in troops instead of singly. Cutlasses hung at their sides. Their tight leather belts held many a knife or clumsy pistol. Their walk on the street was a reckless swagger; and a listener who could understand French could catch in their loud conversation many a scornful sneer or braggart defiance of the Americans.

Such a state of affairs could not long continue. Each party was ready and waiting to fight, and it was not hard to find an excuse. How the fighting began, no one ever knew; but one night the streets of the little city resounded with cries of rage and groans of agony Soon crowds began to gather; and sailors rushed up and down the streets, crying that the French desperadoes had killed three Americans. The rage of the populace, and particularly of the seafaring community, had no bounds. "Arm! arm! and take bloody vengeance upon the murderers," was the cry in all

quarters. The mob blocked all the roadways leading to the water-front. With cutlasses and guns they attacked the sailors on "L'Agile," which lay at a wharf, and drove them overboard. Once in possession of the ship, the enraged rioters vented their fury by cutting away the masts and rigging, tearing to pieces the woodwork of the cabin, and finally putting the torch to the battered bulk, and sending her drifting helplessly down the river. This summary vengeance did not satisfy their anger. They looked about them for the other vessel, "La Vengeance," and discovered that she had been towed away from the shore, and was being warped up stream to a place of safety. Boats were secured, and the irresistible mob set out in mad pursuit. A militia company, hastily sent to the scene of action by the authorities of the town, failed to check the riot; and, after a futile struggle on the part of her crew, "La Vengeance" shared the fate of her consort. Sympathy for France was well rooted out of Savannah then, and the cry of the city was for war.

Before the news of the uprising at Savannah was known in New England, the navy had struck the first blow against French oppression, and the victory had rested with the sailors of the United States. Congress had at last been aroused to a sense of the situation, and had issued orders to captains of American war-vessels, directing them to capture French cruisers wherever found. A number of large merchant-vessels and India-men had been armed hastily, and sent out; and at last the country had a navy on the seas. One of the first vessels to get away was the "Delaware," a twenty-gun ship, commanded by Stephen Decatur the elder. Decatur had been out but a few days when a merchantman, the "Alexander Hamilton," was sighted, from the halliards of which a flag of distress was flying. The "Delaware" ran toward the vessel, and sent a boat aboard, which returned, bringing the captain of the distressed craft. To Decatur the captain related the old story of French aggression, which had become so hateful. Only the day before, he said, his ship had been boarded by boats'-crews from a French privateer of twenty guns. The assailants, once on board, had eaten his provisions, and plundered his cargo without scruple. He gave careful directions as to the course of the privateer after leaving the "Alexander Hamilton," and returned to his ship happy in the thought, that, though he could not regain his plundered property, the thieves at least would be punished.

Decatur crowded on all sail, and set off in pursuit of the oppressor. Four hours later, the lookout forward reported four schooners in sight off the bow. For a moment the captain was puzzled, as he had no means of knowing which was the guilty privateer; but, after brief deliberation, he determined to adopt strategy. The rigging of his vessel was slackened, the yards slewed round, and every attempt made to transform the trim man-o'-war into a shiftless merchantman. Then the helmsman was instructed to carefully avoid running near the suspected schooners. The ruse succeeded admirably. The lookouts in the tops of the schooners reported an American merchantman in sight, but making attempts to escape. The cupidity of the Frenchmen was aroused. In the "Delaware" they saw only a defenceless ship, from which, by virtue of their strength, they could take whatever plunder they desired. From the decks of the "Delaware," the sailors could see the Frenchmen shaking out sail after sail; and soon one schooner, a perfect cloud of canvas, took the lead, and left her consorts far in the rear. It was the privateer they were after. The jackies of the "Delaware" clambered into the rigging, and set all sail, with the clumsiness of merchant-sailors; but, though the ship spread a large expanse of canvas, she was making but little progress, for two long cables dragged in the water astern, holding her back. The Frenchman came up gallantly, but suddenly discovered the ports along the side of the "Delaware," and concluded he had caught a Tartar. It was too late to escape then; for the "Delaware," coming about, had the schooner directly under her guns, and the Frenchman had no course left but to surrender. The privateer proved to be "Le Croyable," of fourteen guns and seventy men. Her captain was vastly astounded to hear that the United States had at last sent out cruisers against the French, who had come to look upon Americans as their legitimate prey. Keeping "Le Croyable" alongside, Decatur ran for Philadelphia, where he was received with unbounded enthusiasm. The captured ship was taken into the United States navy, under the name of the "Retaliation," and sent, under command of Lieut. Bainbridge, to cruise in search of other privateers.

But the career of the "Retaliation" under the American flag was neither long nor glorious. Ill luck seemed to attend the vessel in all her cruises, and Bainbridge wandered up and down the high seas without

getting within range of a French cruiser or privateer. In November, 1798, the "Retaliation" was cruising, with two other men-of-war, in the West Indies, not far from Guadaloupe. One day three sails were made out to the eastward, and two more to the westward. Bainbridge thought that at last his opportunity had arrived; and the "Retaliation" set off to reconnoitre the strangers on the eastward, while the two other American ships made after the three sails in the opposite direction. As Bainbridge gained upon his chase, he concluded from their appearance that they were two English ships, and accordingly threw aside all caution, and sailed boldly alongside. Unluckily, they proved to be hostile French cruisers; and, when the discovery was made, the "Retaliation" was well within range. Every sail was set, and the ship put before the wind, to escape from the enemy, but too late. The leading ship of the enemy was a fine frigate; and she rushed through the water after the fugitive, like a dolphin after a flying-fish. Soon a heavy shot from one of the frigate's bow-chasers came whizzing by the "Retaliation," unpleasantly reminding the Americans that they were still within range, and their adversaries carried heavy metal. The second frigate soon opened fire, and the position of the "Retaliation" became hopeless. Her flag was unwillingly hauled down, and the vessel became again the property of its original owners. It is a strange coincidence, that this ship should have thus been the first prize of both Americans and French in the war.

The Frenchmen were not content with their success in capturing the "Retaliation:" so, while one frigate stopped to secure the prize, the other passed on in hot chase after "The Retaliation's" two former consorts, the "Montezuma" and "Norfolk." Bainbridge was taken aboard the French frigate "Volontaire," which then continued her course in the wake of her consort, the "Insurgente." For the captured American captain on the deck of the "Volontaire," the chase was one of great excitement. He well knew that the two stately French frigates were much more than a match for the flying Americans; and, should they overhaul the chase, the "Montezuma" and the "Norfolk" would join the "Retaliation" in French captivity. Racked with anxiety he paced the deck, trying in vain not to perceive that the pursuers were steadily gaining, and chafing under the position of helplessness in which he found himself. But an opportunity to help did unexpectedly present itself. The French captain, after

a long look through his marine-glasses at the flying craft, turned to Bainbridge, and inquired, —

"What may be the force of your consorts, captain?"

Without a moment's hesitation, Bainbridge responded, —

"The ship carries twenty-eight twelve-pounders, and the brig twenty nines."

The Frenchman was astounded, as well he might be; for Bainbridge's answer was a most preposterous falsehood, nearly doubling the actual armament of the two vessels. An eager consultation was immediately held by the officers on the quarter-deck. Bainbridge looked on anxiously, and was delighted with the success of his ruse, when he heard orders for the hoisting of a signal which should call back the frigate leading in the chase. The signal was hoisted; and the "Insurgente," obeying, abandoned the chase, and returned. Her captain was indignant at his recall, and curious to know the cause of it. When told of Bainbridge's statement, he was furious; for his ship had been close enough to the chase to see that the Americans were small craft, utterly unable to cope with the two pursuing frigates. For his falsehood, Bainbridge was roundly abused, and many a French oath was hurled at his head. His action was indeed inexcusable by the rules of honor; and the utmost that can be said of it by the most patriotic American is, that by his falsehood he saved two good ships for the infant navy of the United States. From a military point of view, however, his conduct was commendable; and in recognition thereof, on his release from captivity, he was made commander of the "Norfolk," one of the vessels he had saved.

France and the United States were now actually at war, although no definite declaration of war had been made by either party. This fact made many French privateers assume an injured air, on being captured by United States ships, and complain that they had never heard of any declaration of war. With a Frenchman of this sort, Stephen Decatur the younger had an experience early in his naval career.

This occurred in February, 1799. The frigate "United States" was cruising near Martinique in that year, and to her young Decatur was attached as a sub-lieutenant. One morning a French privateer was sighted, and the frigate set out in hot pursuit. The privateer took the alarm quickly, and crowded on all sail, until her long, narrow hull slipped

through the waves like a fish. The breeze was fresh, and the chase an exciting one; but gradually the immense spread of the frigate's canvas began to tell, and she rapidly overhauled the fugitive. The French captain was plucky, and even desperate, in his attempt to escape; for, seeing that he was about to be overhauled, he resorted to the expedient of a fox chased by hounds, and doubled, turning short to windward, and running right under the guns of the frigate. The move was a bold one, and might well have succeeded, had it not been for the good marksmanship of a gunner on the frigate, who promptly sent a twenty-four-pound shot (the only one fired in the affair) straight through the hull of the privateer, between wind and water. In an instant all was confusion on the French vessel. The water poured into her hold through the hole cut by the shot; and the hasty lowering of her sails, and the frantic howls for succor from the crew, told the people of the "United States" that their chase was at an end. The boats of the frigate were quickly lowered, and Decatur went in one as officer in command. When he reached the sinking ship, he found a scene too ludicrous to be pathetic. Along the rail of the vessel, from bow to stern, the Frenchmen were perched like birds. Many had stripped off all their clothes, in order to be prepared to swim; and from all arose a medley of plaintive cries for help, and curses on that unlucky shot. By skilful management of the boats, all were saved; and it happened that Decatur pulled into his own boat the captain of the sinking vessel.

Brushing the salt water out of his eyes, this worthy expressed great surprise that he had been fired upon by a vessel bearing the United States flag.

"Ees eet that that ees a sheep of les États-Unis?" he inquired, in the broken English that four years of cruising against Americans had enabled him to pick up.

"It is," responded Decatur.

"I am indeed sairprised. I had not thought that les États-Unis had the war with La République Française."

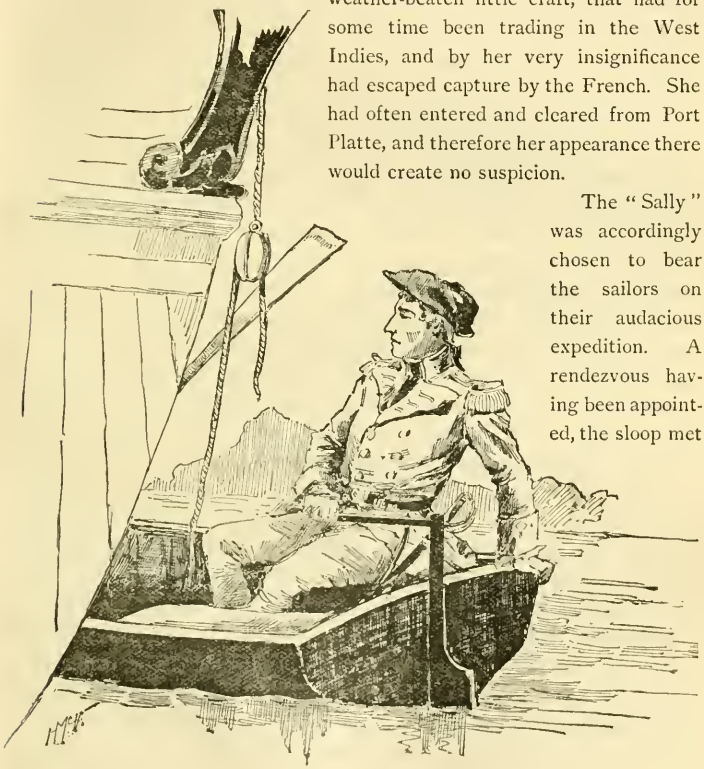
"No, sir," responded Decatur, thoroughly provoked; "but you knew that the French Republic was at war with the United States, that you were taking our merchant-vessels every day, and crowding our countrymen into prison at Basseterre to die like sheep."

This was more than the Frenchman could deny, and he was constrained to accept his capture with the best grace possible.

An audacious, but clearly illegal, exploit of the blue-jackets in this war, was the cutting out and capture of the French letter-of-marque vessel "Sandwich," as she lay in Port Platte, a small harbor on the Spanish side of St. Domingo. Commodore Talbot, who won a reputation for daring and recklessness in the Revolution, was cruising about on the San Domingo station, and had spent some weeks in monotonous voyaging, without an opportunity to capture a single prize. Word was brought to the squadron, that in the little harbor of Port Platte a vessel was taking in a cargo of coffee. From the description of the vessel, Commodore Talbot recognized her as a former British packet, the "Sandwich," now sailing under French letters of marque. Her known speed and seaworthy qualities made her too valuable a prize to be left in the hands of the enemy; and Talbot, without more ado, determined to capture her. The first difficulty that lay in the way was the fact that the vessel was under the protection of Spain, a neutral power. Talbot was no man to notice so purely formal an obstacle. He growled out a decided negative to all hints about respecting a neutral flag. Spain neutral, indeed! She might claim to be neutral, but her Picaroons were too often to be found among the French pirates to leave any respect for Spain's neutrality in the mind of a man of sense; and the "Sandwich" he was going to take, and on his own responsibility. This silenced all opposition.

Having arrived at the determination to take the "Sandwich," the next problem to be solved was, how shall she be taken? Obviously the first step was to make a careful reconnoissance of the ship and her defences. To Lieut. Hull of the "Constitution," this duty was assigned. One dark and stormy night Mr. Hull took one of the frigate's cutters, and, pulling into the harbor, carefully examined the situation. On his return, he reported that the "Sandwich" was stripped of her rigging, and lay directly under the guns of a small battery, built on shore for her protection. To sail in with the frigate, and capture the enemy by mere force of arms, would have been simple enough; but the object of the Americans was to take the ship without injuring her, in order that she might at once join the United States squadron. Strategy was therefore necessary.

It was accordingly determined to secure an American merchant-vessel, that could enter the port, and run alongside the "Sandwich," without arousing suspicion. Luckily at that very moment a craft turned up that filled the need precisely. This was the American sloop "Sally," a battered, weather-beaten little craft, that had for some time been trading in the West Indies, and by her very insignificance had escaped capture by the French. She had often entered and cleared from Port Platte, and therefore her appearance there would create no suspicion.



HULL MAKES A RECONNOISSANCE.

The "Sally" was accordingly chosen to bear the sailors on their audacious expedition. A rendezvous having been appointed, the sloop met the "Constitution" far out at sea; and a large body of blue-jackets and marines left the frigate, and took quarters on the clumsy little merchantman, which then laid her course for Port Platte. About mid-

night the lookouts on the "Sally" saw a vessel's lights near at hand; but, beyond reporting to the officer of the deck, they paid no heed to their neighbor. Suddenly, however, out of the darkness came a bright flash; and the hum of a heavy shot in the air above the "Sally" was followed by the dull report of a cannon. At the same time a blue light burned on the deck of the vessel from which the shot proceeded, showed her to be a powerful frigate. Then ensued a few moments of intense suspense for the little band on the "Sally." Should the stranger prove to be a French frigate, all was lost; but in that latitude English vessels were common, and possibly this might be one. Soon the regular thumping of oars in the tholepins, and the splashing of the waves against an approaching boat, could be heard; and in a few minutes a hail came from the black water alongside, and the dark figure of a man standing in the stern-sheets of a boat was seen. A rope was thrown him, by the aid of which he nimbly clambered aboard. An involuntary murmur of relief arose from the party on the "Sally," as by the dim light of the lanterns they saw that the officer wore a British uniform. The officer himself could not repress a start and exclamation of surprise as he saw a band of officers in naval uniform, and a large body of blue-jackets and marines, on the vessel which he expected to find manned by a half-dozen lanky Yankees, commanded by a down-east "skipper."

"Why, what ship's this?" he exclaimed in surprise, as he looked upon the armed men about him. Lieut. Hull, who was in command, explained to him the situation, and told him of the adventure that was being attempted. The officer seemed much disappointed, and told Mr. Hull that the British frigate was standing about outside the harbor, to capture the "Sandwich" as she came out; but the idea of so boldly setting at naught the principles of neutrality had not occurred to them. After a few minutes' conversation, the visitor returned to his ship, and the "Sally" proceeded on her errand. She reached the entrance to the harbor of Port Platte in the morning, and sailed boldly in. Most of the crew and the marines were hidden beneath the bulwarks, or sent below; so that the people on the "Sandwich" gave but a glance to the approaching vessel, until she ran so close to their vessel's bows that they feared an accident.

"Look out there, or you'll run foul of us!" shouted a mate from the

deck of the "Sandwich; and, as if his cry was a signal, the helm of the "Sally" was put down, the vessel ranged up alongside, and in an instant a torrent of armed men poured over the sides of the surprised Frenchman, and drove the crew below. There was no resistance. The ship was captured in five minutes. The marines of the expedition had been sent ashore to spike the guns of the battery, and their work was performed with equal promptitude. Then all hands set to work rigging the captured vessel, and getting her ready for sea. On the shore the people were in the greatest excitement, beating drums, parading the few militia, and threatening dire revenge in the name of outraged Spain. But the captors of the vessel paid but little attention to their enemies; and by sunset the "Sandwich," with all sails set, left the harbor, and joined the United States squadron.

The news of this achievement, lawless as it was, evoked great enthusiasm in the United States. A nation's conscience is elastic; and the people praised the heroes of the "Sandwich" episode, much as sixty-five years later they commended the commander of the "Wachusett" for running down and capturing the Confederate ship "Florida," which was relying upon the protection of a neutral port in Brazil. Yet in 1814, when two British frigates attacked and captured the "Essex" in the harbor of Rio Janeiro, the good people of the United States were loud in their denunciations of the treachery of a commander who would so abuse the protection of a neutral nation. Such inconsistencies are only too common in the history of nations. In the end, however, the affair of the "Sandwich" terminated disastrously for the bold adventurers; for the protests of Spain were too forcible to be disregarded, and the prize-money of all concerned in the exploit was confiscated to pay the damages awarded the injured party.

Not all the successes of the United States navy in the war with France were, like those we have related, dependent upon the speed rather than the fighting qualities of our ships. Not many months had passed, when two representative ships of the warring nations met, and tried conclusions at the mouths of their cannon. It was on the 9th of February that the "Constellation," one of the new American frigates, was cruising on her station in the West Indies, when her lookout reported a large ship some miles to leeward. The frigate at once ran down upon

the stranger, which hoisted American colors. Among ships of the same navy it is customary to have private signals of recognition; and Commodore Truxton, who commanded the "Constellation," set his signal, and awaited the answer. But no answer came; and the stranger, evidently considering further disguise impossible, boldly set French colors, and fired a gun to windward by way of a challenge.

On the "Constellation" the challenge aroused universal enthusiasm. For the first time since the Revolution, the gallant defenders of the stars and stripes were to have an opportunity to try their strength with a hostile man-of-war. The enemy seemed no less ready for the conflict, and waited gallantly for the "Constellation" to come down to closer quarters. From both ships came the roll of the drums and the shrill pipings of the bo's'n's whistle, as the men were called to quarters. Then all became still, and the two frigates bore down upon each other. Neither antagonist was hasty about opening fire, and the report of the first gun came from the Yankee when she had come into point-blank range. Then began the thunderous broadsides, that soon enveloped the hulls of the two ships in dense gray smoke; so that, to an observer at a little distance, all that could be seen of the fight was the tapering masts and yard-arms, above the smoke, crowded with sailors repairing damages, and nimble young midshipmen shrilly ordering about the grizzled seamen, and now and again taking a crack at the enemy with pistol or musket, by way of recreation. In the foretop of the "Constellation" was stationed young David Porter, who in that trying moment showed the result of his hard schooling in the merchant-service, of which we have spoken. By the rapid fire of the enemy, the foretopmast was badly cut, and there was great danger that it might go by the board. Porter hailed the deck several times for instructions, but, finding that his voice could not be heard above the roar of battle, determined to act upon his own responsibility, and accordingly cut away the sails, lowered the yards, and, by relieving the injured spar of all strain, prevented its falling. In the mean time the battle raged fiercely below. The American frigate was more powerful in her armament, and better handled, than the Frenchman. Her guns were handled with deliberation, and the aim of the gunners was sure and deadly; while the shot from the enemy went hurtling through the rigging of the "Constellation," doing but little damage. The

decks of the Frenchman were covered with dead and wounded, and at last two raking broadsides from the American frigate ended the conflict. When the vanquished ship was boarded, she proved to be the "Insurgente," the same frigate that had captured the "Retaliation" some months before. Her loss in this engagement amounted to twenty-nine killed and forty-one wounded, while the cock-pit of the "Constellation" was tenanted by but three wounded men; and but one American had lost his life, he having been killed by an officer, for cowardice. Both ships were badly cut up in the engagement.

The news of this victory was received with great rejoicing in the United States, and was celebrated with cannon-firing and the ringing of bells. At Boston, the fourth Sunday in March was set for a day of general rejoicing; and on that day huge crowds gathered in State Street, and after salutes had been fired, and the city's bells pealed, the people, at a given signal, joined in three mighty cheers, that fairly shook the surrounding houses, for Truxton, the "Constellation," the blue-jackets, and the success of the wooden walls of America.

Even after the "Insurgente" had struck her flag, the tars of the "Constellation" found they had an elephant on their hands. The work of transferring the prisoners was begun, and actively prosecuted; but, when night fell, there were still nearly two hundred Frenchmen on the prize. The wind was rising fast, and the long rollers of the Atlantic were being lashed into foaming breakers by the rising gale. It was hazardous for the two vessels to continue near each other; and Lieutenant Rodgers, with Midshipman Porter and eleven men, was detailed to take charge of the prize, and bring her into port. When the officers boarded the prize, they found that they had indeed a desperate undertaking before them. It was difficult enough for thirteen men to handle the great ship, without having to keep in subjection one hundred and seventy-three captives. To add to the danger, the gratings had been thrown overboard, and there was no way of confining the captives in the hold. A careful search for handcuffs resulted only in failure. But Rodgers was a man of decision, and Porter, though but a boy, was bold and determined; and between them they solved the problem. The prisoners were ordered below; and a sentinel was placed at each hatchway, with orders to shoot the first man who should attempt to come on deck. Howitzers loaded

with grape were trained upon the hatchway, for use in case of an organized movement of the prisoners. For three days the officers sustained this fearful strain, without a moment's sleep; but their labors were finally crowned by successfully bringing the ship and prisoners into St. Kitts.

In the second pitched battle of the war, the "Constellation" was again the American combatant; but this time, though the fight was a glorious one, it did not terminate so fortunately for the American ship. It was on the 1st of February, 1800, that the gallant frigate, under the same commander, was cruising about her old hunting-grounds, near Guadaloupe. A sail was sighted, which, after a careful examination through his marine-glass, Commodore Truxton pronounced to be an English merchantman. As an invitation to the stranger to approach, English colors were hoisted on the "Constellation," but had only the effect of causing the stranger to sheer off; for she was, indeed, a French war-vessel. Perplexed by the actions of the mysterious ship, the "Constellation" gave chase, and soon came near enough to see that she had caught a Tartar; for the vessel was the French frigate "La Vengeance," mounting fifty-two guns. Although a more powerful vessel than the American, she continued her flight; while the gallant Truxton, caring nothing for the odds against him, kept on in hot pursuit. All the remainder of that day, and until noon of the next, the chase continued, with but little change in the position of the ships. "A stern chase is a long chase," thought the jackies on the "Constellation;" but they were not discouraged, and only crowded on the more sail. On the afternoon of the second day, the American began to gain rapidly; and by eight at night the two ships were within speaking distance of each other. Truxton mounted the rail, and shouted through a speaking-trumpet, "What ship is that?" The only answer was a shot from the stern-port of the Frenchman, and the fight was opened.

It was then growing dark, though the faint glow of the long tropic twilight still lingered on the western horizon. Above the towering masts of the two great frigates, the stars gleamed with a brilliancy seldom seen in more northern latitudes. As the ships rushed through the water, the waves broke against the bows, and fell back in masses of phosphorescent light; while the wakes of the vessels could be traced far back into the darkness, — two parallel paths of light, that glowed and sparkled like the milky way that spanned the starry sky above.

Side by side the two frigates ploughed through the water. The creaking of their cordage, and the rushing of the wind through the rigging, mingled with the thunder of the cannonade, which, though slow, and made up of single reports, when the "Constellation" was confined to the use of her bow-chasers, soon rose to thunderous broadsides as the two ships came side to side. As the twilight died away, the two contestants were enveloped in almost total darkness, save for the fitful flashes of the cannon, and the red glare of the battle-lanterns that hung from the shrouds. The gunners had for a target nothing but a black, shapeless mass, that could be seen rushing through the waves some hundreds of yards away. But this did not prevent fearful execution being done on both sides. For five hours the two ships kept up the running fight. The ponderous eighteen and forty-two pound shot of the enemy crashed into the "Constellation," or swept her decks, doing dreadful damage. The deck was strewn with dead and dying men, and the surgeons down in the cock-pit soon had their tables full of moaning sufferers. No one could tell what might be the condition of "La Vengeance;" but her regular fire told that she was in no wise disabled. At one o'clock in the morning, the sound of her guns seemed to be more distant; and by the flash of the cannon it was seen that she was drawing out of the fight. The Americans cheered lustily, and Truxton ordered that his ship be braced up in chase.

But the fire of the enemy had been rapid and well directed; and now, at this critical moment, its results were to rob the "Constellation" of her victory. As the ships were brought about, to follow in the track of the flying "Vengeance," an officer came rushing to the quarter-deck, and reported that all the shrouds and braces of the foremast had been shot away, and the mast was in momentary danger of falling. The rigging had been so literally cut in pieces by the fire of the enemy, that splicing was out of the question; but Truxton, in the hope of saving his mast, called all hands from the guns, and the fire of the "Constellation" stopped.

Up in the foretop was stationed Midshipman Jarvis, with a dozen or more of jackies, whose duty it was to mend the cordage of the topmast, and to keep up a musketry fire upon the enemy. Long before the officer of the deck had reported the danger of the foremast, one of the topmen had told Jarvis, who was but a lad, that the mast was likely to fall.

"Ay, ay, my lad," responded the plucky young officer; "but our place is here, and we must go with it."

The sailors on the deck below worked manfully: but, notwithstanding all their efforts, the mast soon went by the board; and Jarvis and his brave comrades were thrown far out into the black water, never to be seen again.

The fall of the foremast ended the battle for the "Constellation." Helpless, and cumbered by the wreck, she tossed about on the water, while her foe made good her escape. What might have been the outcome of the conflict, had it continued, it is impossible to tell. "La Vengeance" carried heavier metal and a larger crew than the American frigate; and Truxton, with all his dash, found no mean adversary in Capt. Pitot. Yet the condition of the French ship when she came into port at Curaçoa showed that the fire of the Yankee gunners had been rapid and accurate. Fifty of the enemy were killed, and one hundred and ten wounded; while, of the Americans, only thirty-nine appeared on the lists of killed and wounded. It was said at the time, that Capt. Pitot reported having struck his flag three times; hoisting it again, on finding that in the darkness the "Constellation" took no notice of the surrender. But this seems, on the face of it, improbable; and the action can hardly be awarded to either ship, although the gallantry shown on either side was enough to win a victory.

It may well be imagined that this brilliant action, together with the capture of "L'Insurgente," made the "Constellation" the most popular ship of the navy; a place which she held until the stirring events of the war with England pushed the "Constitution" so far to the front, that even now, when she lies dismantled and rotting at the Brooklyn navy-yard, Americans still think of "Old Ironsides" as the typical ship of our once glorious navy.

The actions between the "Constellation" and the "Vengeance" and "Insurgente" were the chief contests between regularly commissioned ships of the two nations in the war with France. But the West Indies were filled with privateers and semi-piratical craft, with which the navy waged a ceaseless warfare, which well prepared the blue-jackets for the graver struggle which was yet to come with Great Britain. The half-savage population of the French islands was a fruitful source of trouble to the

American seaman. These gentry, known as Picaroons, seemed to have a natural inclination for piracy; and the unlucky merchant-captain who should come to anchor, or be becalmed, near one of the islands, was sure to see his vessel boarded, and his cargo plundered, by a lawless horde of Frenchmen and mulattoes, whose dialect was an unmusical combination of French and African tongues. The custom of the Picaroons was to do their cruising in huge barges propelled by sweeps. With these they would often cut out a merchant-vessel from beneath the guns of a protecting man-of-war, and tow her off to be plundered at leisure. Occasionally, however, their well-laid plans failed in the execution.

One of the most noted of these occasions was the repulse of ten Picaroon barges that attacked the United States topsail schooner "Experiment," and a fleet of merchantmen under her charge. The "Experiment," with her convoy, was lying becalmed in the Bight of Leogane, in the island of San Domingo. Not a breath of air was stirring; and the vessels, drifting about at the mercy of the currents, soon became widely separated, and were an easy prey for the hordes of Picaroons that swarmed in that region. In no way could the "Experiment" secure a position which would enable her to protect all the merchantmen. In this dilemma it was determined to disguise the war-vessel, in the hopes that the pirates, taking her for a merchantman, would attack her first. This was done; and, as luck would have it, the Picaroons fell into the trap.

Although not the captain of the ship, Lieut. David Porter was in command on this occasion; and, on hearing that ten Picaroon barges with swivels in the bows, and crews of forty men each, were approaching, he sent his crew to quarters, and prepared for a desperate resistance. Onward over the smooth waters came the huge barges, each with its twenty-six oars, looking like a mighty centipede. On the ship every thing was quiet, as the jackies stood to their guns, with the prospect of a deadly struggle before them. Should the barges get to close quarters, and surround the schooner, no earthly power could prevent their boarding, when their numbers would surely bring them success. But the painful pause before the battle was not long. Suddenly Porter, ever on the alert, cried out to fire. From every gun that could be brought to bear, a storm of grape and canister was rained upon the advancing boats; and the yells that went up from the astounded Picaroons told of the deadly

work done in the crowded boats. For a moment, the fleet of barges fell into confusion; some retreating, some advancing, and others drifting about helpless. Although the murderous fire was kept up, the pirates formed again, and attempted to get alongside, but were repeatedly beaten back. With musketry and swivels they attempted to answer the fire of the Americans; but with little effect, for the crew of the "Experiment" kept close under the bulwarks. Men were precious then, and Porter would not let one expose himself unnecessarily; but he himself, from his prominent post of observation, was an easy mark, and a Picaroon's bullet soon lodged in his shoulder. Notwithstanding the painful wound, he never left his post. The unexpected opposition only maddened the Picaroons, and they made desperate attempts to get alongside; but to no avail. Now the stern and now the bow of the "Experiment" was chosen as the point of attack; but still the rapid fire of the jackies beat the pirates back.

On the low-lying shores of the islands, some hundreds more of the Picaroons had gathered to watch the conflict; and, as the boats became short-handed from the carnage, they put back to the shore, and returned to the fight fully re-enforced. The bodies of the dead were thrown overboard without ceremony, and soon attracted great schools of the fierce sharks that abound in the waters of the tropics. Then a new horror was added to the scene. At a moment when the barges wavered and floated for a moment without motion, Porter ordered his gunners to load with solid shot. Two or three broadsides rang out; and, when the smoke cleared away, two barges were seen to be sinking. The affrighted crews bent to their oars, and strained every muscle to reach the shore; but while yet in deep water, the barges sunk, and the Picaroons were left floundering in the sea. All struck out manfully for the shore; but suddenly one sprung half from the water, and with a horrid yell sunk from sight. One after another disappeared in the same way; for the sharks had tasted blood, and were not to be appeased. For seven hours the conflict raged fiercely; but at last the Picaroons confessed themselves beaten, and sullenly relinquished their attacks upon the "Experiment." But they were not to be wholly robbed of their plunder; and two merchant-vessels fell a prey to their piratical violence, before a breeze, springing up, enabled the squadron to escape.

Before the year was over, the Picaroons had another serious defeat to mourn over; and on this second occasion they were well punished for their many piracies. The "Boston," a twenty-eight-gun ship, was convoying a merchant-brig to Port au Prince, when the lookout discovered nine large barges skulking along the shore, ready to pounce upon the two vessels when a favorable moment should arrive. Porter was again in command. His tactics were at once determined upon; and the ports of the "Boston" were closed, and the ship thoroughly disguised. The Picaroons were deceived sufficiently to make a dash upon the two ships, and approach boldly within easy gun-shot; then, discovering their mistake, they turned and fled in panic. This time no calm hampered the ship-of-war; and, making all sail, she dashed into their midst. For two hours she kept within easy range of the barges; and her gunners, working deliberately, did fearful execution in the ranks of the enemy, and sunk three barges before the wretched fugitives could reach the shore. After dealing out this summary justice, the "Boston" continued her voyage, and, after leaving her convoy in the port of her destination, began a cruise about the islands and the Spanish Main. In the course of this cruise she met the French corvette "Le Berceau," which struck after a plucky action of two hours. The Frenchman was badly cut up in hull and rigging, and shortly after the surrender her fore and main masts went by the board. The "Boston" was but little injured, and took her prize safely into port.

After this the fighting was chiefly confined to short, sharp affrays between the smaller United States ships and the French privateers, which were generally good sailers and well manned, although deficient in metal. The great frigates like the "Constellation" found no more adversaries worthy of their fighting qualities, and only the sloops and topsail-schooners gave their crews a chance to smell gunpowder. Some of these smaller actions, however, were sharp and gallant, although their details have not been preserved like those of the famous naval duels.

The "Experiment," after her adventure with the Picaroons, fought two gallant battles, and was successful in each, although the second for a time threatened to lead to international difficulties. While cruising on her station, the vessel made two sail, which, as they came nearer, proved to be a brig of eighteen guns and a three-masted schooner of twenty guns, both flying the French tricolor, and both intent on mischief. The

American fled, but laid her course in such a way as to separate the two pursuers. When night had fallen, Lieut.-Commander Stewart, who commanded the "Experiment," saw that the enemy's forces were divided by about a league of green water, and at once determined to strike a blow. Doubling on his course, he ran his vessel alongside the schooner, and poured in two or three broadsides with such rapidity and haste that the Frenchman struck before his consort could come to his aid. Hastily throwing Lieut. Porter and a prize-crew aboard the prize, Stewart dashed off after the brig, which fled incontinently, and proved too good a sailer to be overtaken. Pure audacity had carried the day for the "Experiment," for the brig was powerful enough to have blown her pursuer to bits in a short engagement.

The second exploit of the "Experiment" was no less gallant than this, but in the end proved far less satisfactory. Late in a summer's afternoon a suspicious sail was made; and the chase, begun at once, had continued until nightfall. When darkness settled over the ocean, Stewart calculated the course laid by the stranger, and ordered his helmsman to keep the ship on that course until midnight, when, if the fugitive was not overhauled, the chase would be abandoned. Just before midnight a sail was seen near by and to windward. The men were sent to quarters; and with guns shotted, and battle-lanterns burning, the "Experiment" ran up under the stranger's lee, and hailed. No answer was returned. Perplexed and irritated, Stewart ordered a shot fired into the stranger, which was no sooner done than a broadside was returned, which made the schooner reel. Both vessels were then plunged into conflict, though neither knew the name or nationality of the opponent. For a time the "Experiment" was handicapped by the heavy wind, which laid her over so far that her guns were elevated skyward, and her shot whistled through the enemy's tops. To obviate this, planks were thrust under the breeches of the guns, until at last the proper range was secured, when an active cannonade soon forced the stranger to strike. Lieut. Porter was sent to take possession of the prize; but the report he brought back put all thought of prize-money out of the minds of the victors, for the stranger was a Bermudian privateer, flying the British flag, and under the protection of a nation with which the United States was at peace. The fault lay with the privateers for not responding to the hail, but the Americans

did all in their power to repair the damage done. All the next day they lay by their vanquished adversary, and the sailors of two ships worked side by side in patching up the injuries done by the shot. By night the privateer was able to continue her cruise, resolving, doubtless, to avoid future conflicts with the ships of the American navy.

But to enter into the details of each of the naval duels of the French war of 1798, would require a volume devoted exclusively to its consideration. Although there was never a declaration of war between the two countries, yet the warfare on the ocean was earnest, and even desperate. Both nations went to work with a will, and the results were of incalculable benefit to the then pygmy navy of the United States. In their newspapers the Americans read with wonder and pride of the successes of their new vessels and young sailors, against the trained seamen and best frigates of France. When the war closed, the country rang with the praises of the blue-jackets. Indeed, a record of sixty-four French vessels captured, besides many American vessels which were recaptured from their captors, was enough to arouse feelings of pride throughout the nation; and the celerity with which France seized upon the proposal for peace showed well the reputation which our navy had gained beyond the ocean. For months after the peace was signed, the names of Bainbridge, Truxton, Stewart, and Talbot were household words throughout the nation; and the deeds of the gallant ships along the Spanish Main were the favorite stories of the boys of the land. Three of the oaken veterans, however, never came home; but against their names must be put the saddest of all naval records: foundered at sea. The captured "Insurgente," the "Saratoga," and the "Pickering" simply vanished from the ocean. Over fourscore years have passed; and of them, and the gallant lads that manned them, nothing has ever been known. Whether they perished by the fury of the tropical typhoon, whether a midnight collision sent them suddenly to the bottom, or whether the ships were destroyed and the crews murdered by the piratical desperadoes of the West Indies, can never be known. Somewhere on the coral-strewn bed of the blue seas of the tropics lie the mouldering hulks of those good ships, and the bones of their gallant crews. There will they lie, unknown and unsought, until earthly warfare is over for all men, and the sea gives up its dead.

## CHAPTER III.

PROPOSED REDUCTION OF THE NAVY. — RENEWAL OF BRITISH OUTRAGES. — THE AFFAIR OF THE "BALTIMORE." — ATTACK ON THE "LEANDER." — ENCOUNTER BETWEEN THE "CHESAPEAKE" AND "LEOPARD."

NOT many months had elapsed after the close of the war between the United States and France, when the pride of the nation in the navy that had won such laurels in that conflict began to wane. In the place of poems and editorials singing the praises and pointing out the value of the navy, the newspapers began to be filled with demands for its reduction. It was an unwarrantable expense, exclaimed the critics of the press, for a nation so young, and so far from the warring peoples of Europe, to maintain a navy at all. A few gunboats to guard the coast would be enough. All the consequences of the reduction of the navy at the close of the Revolution were forgotten in an instant. A penny-wise and pound-foolish spirit came over all the political leaders; and the Democratic party, then newly come into power, determined to endear itself to the hearts of the people by cutting down the expenses of the Government, and to this end they attacked first the appropriations for the navy. A gallant fight was made against the total abolition of the navy; and finally it was decided to retain thirteen of the ships-of-war on the list, while the others should be sold.

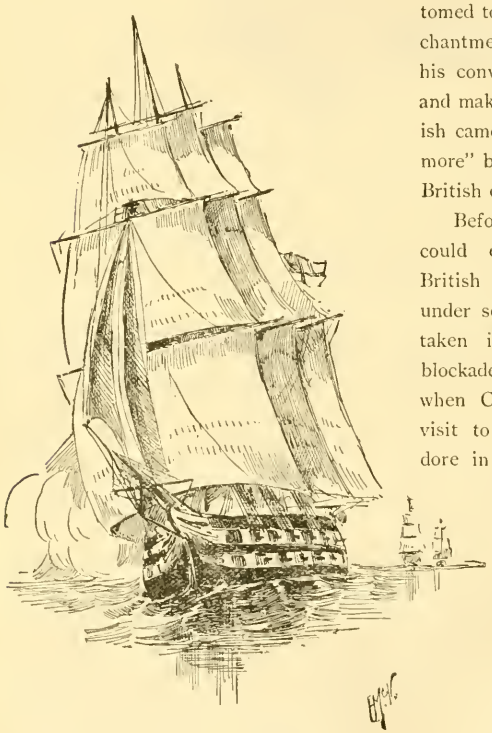
With these thirteen vessels, of which the most noted were the "Constitution," the "Constellation," and the "United States," the navy was placed upon a peace footing. Even this moderate squadron, however, brought out much opposition from economically minded statesmen; but the aggressions of the Barbary pirates, and the war with Tripoli which opened in 1801, gave the sailor lads active employment, and for the time the outcry of the economists against the navy ceased.

Of the various wars with Tripoli and the other states of Barbary, we have already given some account. The political bearing of the Tripolitan war upon the war which afterwards followed with Great Britain was slight; but, as discipline for the sterner reality of naval warfare with the nation long reputed to be "mistress of the seas," the experience of the Yankee tars with the turbaned infidels was invaluable.

Let us, then, return to the shameful recountal of the injuries committed by the British upon the American flag on the high seas. Even while the United States was at war with France, and thus aiding the British, the outrages never ceased. American sailors were still impressed. American vessels were boarded, and often seized, on the slightest pretexts. Even the ships of the Government were not exempt, for the British respected no right save that of greater power.

It was in November, 1798, that the United States sloop-of-war "Baltimore," of twenty guns, and under command of Capt. Phillips, was in charge of a convoy of merchantmen bound to Havana. On the morning of the 16th of that month, the sloop, with her convoy, were in sight of their destination, and could even see the solid, towering walls of the Moro, rising high above the low-lying shores about Havana. The breeze was fresh and fair; and all hands expected to cast anchor before night in the beautiful bay, on the shores of which stands the chief city of the island of fruits and spices. On the "Baltimore" the jackies were busily at work holystoning the decks, until they glistened with the milky whiteness dear to the eye of the sailor of the days before the era of yellow pine or black, unsightly iron ships. The shrouds and standing rigging had been pulled taut with many a "Yo, heave ho!" until the wind hummed plaintively through the taut cordage, as through the resounding strings of an Æolian harp. The brasswork and polished breeches of the guns were polished by the vigorous rubbing by muscular sailors, until they shone again. All told of a coming season in a friendly port.

While the work of preparation for port was thus going busily on, the lookout hailed the deck, and reported a squadron in sight. A moment's glance convinced Capt. Phillips that the strangers were British war-vessels; and, as they were still accustomed to annoy American merchantmen, he hastily signalled his convoy to carry sail hard, and make port before the British came up, while the "Baltimore" bore up to speak to the British commodore.



THE BRITISH SQUADRON.

Before the merchantmen could escape, however, the British cut off three of them, under some peculiar and mistaken ideas of the law of blockades. More than this, when Capt. Phillips paid his visit to the English commodore in the latter's cabin, he was calmly informed that it was intended to take from the "Baltimore" into the British service every sailor who had not a regular American protection; this under the new English doctrine, that every sailor was an Englishman unless proved to be otherwise. The avowal by the British captain of this intention filled Phillips with indignation, and he warmly protested against any such action.

It would, he insisted, be an outrage on the dignity of the nation which he served; and, as the overpowering force of the British rendered resistance impossible, he should insist upon surrendering his ship should

they persist in their undertaking, which was no more nor less than open warfare. With this he arose from his seat, and leaving the cabin, to which he had been invited as the guest of a friendly nation, returned to his own ship.

Here he found a state of affairs that still further added to his indignation. At the foot of the gangway of the "Baltimore" floated a boat from one of the British ships, and on the deck of the sloop was a lieutenant in British uniform in the act of mustering the American crew. Capt. Phillips at once seized the muster-roll, and ordered the officious Briton to walk to leeward, while the crew of the "Baltimore" were sent to their quarters.

But, having done this, he became doubtful as to the course for him to pursue. Successful resistance was out of the question; for he was surrounded by five British vessels, one of which carried ninety-eight guns, while the smallest mounted thirty-two, or twelve more than the "Baltimore." Even had the odds against him been less great, Capt. Phillips felt grave doubts as to his authority to resist any armed vessel. He had sailed under instructions that "the vessels of every other nation (France excepted) are on no account to be molested; and I wish particularly to impress upon your mind," wrote the Secretary of the Navy, "that should you ever see an American vessel captured by the armed ship of any nation at war, with whom we are at peace, you cannot lawfully interfere, for it is to be taken for granted that such nation will compensate for such capture, if it should prove to have been illegally made." After some deliberation over this clause in his instructions, Capt. Phillips concluded that for him to make even a formal resistance would be illegal; and accordingly the flag of the "Baltimore" was lowered, and the British were told that the ship was at their disposal. They immediately seized upon fifty-five men from the American crew, who were taken away to the British fleet. But in this wholesale impressment they did not persist. Fifty of the men were sent back; and the squadron set sail, carrying away the five pressed men, and leaving the men of the "Baltimore," from the captain down to the smallest cabin-boy, smarting under the sense of an indignity and insult offered to the flag under which they served.

Capt. Phillips hoisted his flag again, and continued his cruise. News

travelled slowly in those days; and the tidings of this latest British insult did not reach the United States until the "Baltimore," returning home, brought it herself. Hardly had the ship reached port, when Capt. Phillips hastened to Philadelphia, then the national capital, and laid his report of the affair before the Government. In a week's time, without even the formality of a trial, he was dismissed from the navy.

After the lapse of more than eighty years it is impossible to look back upon this affair without indignation, mortification, and regret. That the naval officers of Great Britain should have been able, by the mere force of arms, to inflict so cruel an insult upon our flag, can but arouse indignation in the breast of every true American. And the humiliation was great enough, without having added to it the obviously hasty and unjust action of the authorities, in dismissing, without a trial, an officer who had faithfully served his country. It is indeed possible that Capt. Phillips erred gravely in his course; but justice alone demanded for him a fair trial, and the nature of his instructions certainly afforded him some justification for his action.

The years that opened the nineteenth century were full of events that exerted the greatest influence over the growth of the United States. The continuance of the Napoleonic wars in Europe, our own war with the Barbary powers, the acquisition of Louisiana, — all these had their effect on the growth of the young Republic of the West. But, at the same time, England was continuing her policy of oppression. Her cruisers and privateers swarmed upon the ocean; and impressment of seamen and seizure of vessels became so common, that in 1806 memorials and petitions from seamen and merchants of the seaport towns poured in upon Congress, begging that body to take some action to save American commerce from total destruction. Congress directed the American minister in London to protest; but to no avail. Even while the correspondence on the subject was being carried on, the British gave renewed evidence of their hostility to their former Colonies, and their scorn for the military or naval power of the United States. From the far-off shores of the Mediterranean came the news that boats from the fleet of the British Admiral Collingwood had boarded the United States gunboat No. 7, and taken from her three sailors, under the pretence that they were Englishmen. But an occurrence that shortly followed, nearer home, threw this affair into oblivion, and still further inflamed the national hatred of the English.

A small coasting sloop, one of hundreds that made voyages along the American coast from Portland to Savannah, was running past Sandy Hook into New York Bay, when she was hailed by the British ship "Leander," and ordered to heave to. The captain of the coaster paid no attention to the order, and continued on his way, until a shot from the cruiser crashed into the sloop, and took off the head of the captain, John Pearce of New York. This was murder, and the action of the British in firing upon the sloop was gross piracy. Such an outrage, occurring so near the chief city of the United States, aroused a storm of indignation. The merchants of New York held meetings at the old Tontine Coffee-House, and denounced not only the action of the British cruiser, but even impeached the Government of the United States; declaring that an administration which suffered foreign armed ships to "impress, wound, and murder citizens was not entitled to the confidence of a brave and free people." The fact that the captain of the offending cruiser, on being brought to trial in England, was honorably acquitted, did not tend to soothe the irritation of the Americans.

Occurrences such as this kept alive the American dislike for the English, and a year later an event happened which even the most ardent peace-lover could not but condemn and resent with spirit.

In 1807 the United States frigate "Chesapeake," then lying at the navy-yard at Washington, was put in commission, and ordered to the Mediterranean, to relieve the "Constitution." Nearly a month was consumed in making necessary repairs to hull and cordage, taking in stores, shipping a crew, and attending to the thousand and one details of preparation for sea that a long time out of commission makes necessary to a man-of-war. While the preparations for service were actively proceeding, the British minister informed the naval authorities that three deserters from His British Majesty's ship "Melampus" had joined the crew of the "Chesapeake;" and it was requested that they should be given up. The request was made with due courtesy; and, although there is no principle of international law which directs the surrender of deserters, yet the United States, as a friendly nation, was inclined to grant the request, and an inquiry was made into the case. The facts elicited put the surrender of the men out of the question; for though they frankly confessed to have deserted from the "Melampus," yet they claimed to have been impressed

into the British service, and proved conclusively that they were free Americans. This was reported to the British minister; and, as he made no further protests, it was assumed that he was satisfied.

Some weeks later the vessel left the navy-yard, and dropped down the river to Hampton Roads. Even with the long period occupied in preparation for sea, the armament of the ship was far from being in order; a fact first discovered as she passed Mount Vernon, as she was unable to fire the salute with which at that time all passing war-vessels did honor to the tomb of Washington. After some days' stay at Hampton Roads, during which time additional guns and stores were taken on, and the crew increased to three hundred and seventy-five men, the ship got under way, and started on her voyage.

It was on a breezy morning of June that the "Chesapeake" left the broad harbor of Hampton Roads, the scene of so many of our naval glories. From the masthead of the frigate floated the broad pennant of Commodore Barron, who went out in command of the ship. The decks were littered with ropes, lumber, and stores, which had arrived too late to be properly stowed away. Some confusion is but natural on a ship starting on a cruise which may continue for years, but the condition of the "Chesapeake" was beyond all excuse; a fact for which the fitting-out officers, not her commander, were responsible.

As the American ship passed out into the open ocean, there was a great stir on the decks of four English cruisers that lay quietly at anchor in Lynn Haven Bay; and almost immediately one of these vessels hoisted her anchor, set her sails, and started out in the track of the frigate. A stiff head-wind blowing, the American was forced to tack frequently, in order to get ahead; and her officers noticed that the British ship (the "Leopard," of fifty guns) tacked at the same time, and was evidently following doggedly in the wake of the "Chesapeake." No suspicion that the pursuer had other than peaceful motives in view entered the minds of the American officers; and the ship kept on her course, while the sailors set about putting the decks in order, and getting the vessel in trim for her long voyage. While all hands were thus busily engaged, the "Leopard" bore down rapidly, and soon hailed, saying that she had a despatch for Commodore Barron. The "Chesapeake" accordingly hove to, and waited for a boat to be sent aboard.

The two ships now lay broadside to broadside, and only about a half pistol-shot apart. No idea that the Englishman had any hostile designs seems to have occurred to Commodore Barron; but some of the younger officers noticed that the ports of the "Leopard" were triced up, and the tompions taken out of the muzzles of the cannon. The latter fact was of the gravest import, and should have been reported at once to the commander; but it appears that this was not done.

In a few moments a boat put off from the "Leopard," and pulled to the American ship, where an officer stood waiting at the gangway, and conducted the visitor to Barron's cabin. Here the English lieutenant produced an order, signed by the British Admiral Berkeley, commanding all British ships to watch for the "Chesapeake," and search her for deserters. Commodore Barron immediately responded, that the "Chesapeake" harbored no deserters, and he could not permit his crew to be mustered by the officer of any foreign power. Hardly had this response been made, when a signal from the "Leopard" recalled the boarding officer to his ship.

The officers of the "Chesapeake" were now fully aroused to the dangers of the situation, and began the attempt to get the ship in readiness for action. Commodore Barron, coming out of his cabin for the first time, was forcibly struck by the air of preparation for action presented by the "Leopard." Capt. Gordon, the second in command, was ordered to hasten the work on the gun-deck, and call the crew to quarters. The drummers began to beat the call to quarters, but hasty orders soon stopped them; and the men went to their places quietly, hoping that the threatening attitude of the "Leopard" was mere bravado.

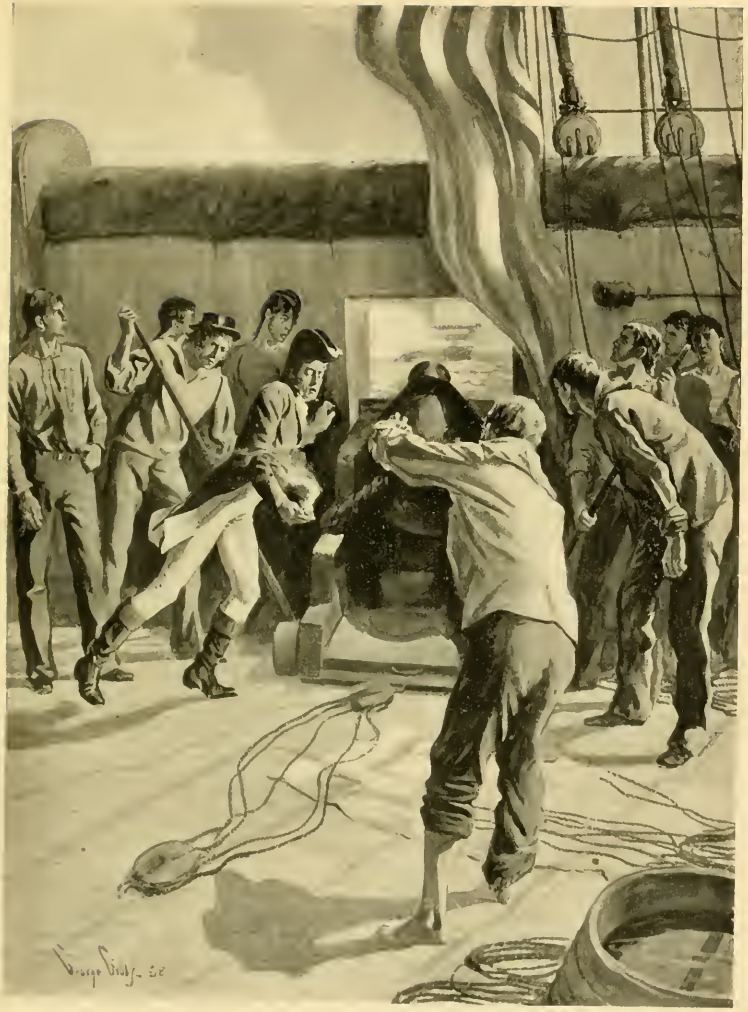
The most painful suspense was felt by all on board the American ship. The attitude of the "Leopard" left little doubt of her hostile intentions, while a glance about the decks of the "Chesapeake" told how little fitted she was to enter into action. Her crew was a new one, never exercised at the guns, and had been mustered to quarters only three times. On the gun-deck lay great piles of cumbrous cables, from the coiling of which the men had been summoned by the call to quarters. On the after-deck were piles of furniture, trunks, and some temporary pantries. What little semblance of order there was, was due to the efforts of one of the lieutenants, who, suspecting trouble when the "Leopard" first came up, had made great exertions toward getting the ship clear.

While the captain stood looking ruefully at the confusion, still more serious troubles were reported. The guns were loaded; but no rammers, powder-flasks, matches, wads, or gun-locks could be found. While search was being made for these necessary articles, a hail came from the "Leopard." Commodore Barron shouted back that he did not understand.

"Commodore Barron must be aware that the orders of the vice-admiral must be obeyed," came the hail again.

Barron again responded that he did not understand. After one or two repetitions, the British determined to waste no more time in talking; and a single shot fired from the bow of the "Leopard" was quickly followed by a full broadside. The heavy shot crashed into the sides of the "Chesapeake," wounding many of the men, and adding to the confusion on the gun-deck. No answer came from the American frigate; for, though the guns were loaded, there was no way of firing them. Matches, locks, or loggerheads were nowhere to be found. Mad with rage at the helpless condition in which they found themselves, the officers made every effort to fire at least one volley. Pokers were heated red-hot in the galley-fire, and carried hastily to the guns, but cooled too rapidly in the rush across the deck. In the mean time, the "Leopard," none too chivalric to take advantage of an unresisting foe, had chosen her position, and was pouring in a deliberate fire. For nearly eighteen minutes the fire was continued, when the flag of the "Chesapeake" was hauled down. Just as it came fluttering from the masthead, Lieut. Allen, crying, "I'll have one shot at those rascals, anyhow," ran to the galley, picked up a live coal in his fingers, and carried it, regardless of the pain, to the nearest gun, which was successfully discharged. This was the only shot that the "Chesapeake" fired during the affair, — battle it cannot be called.

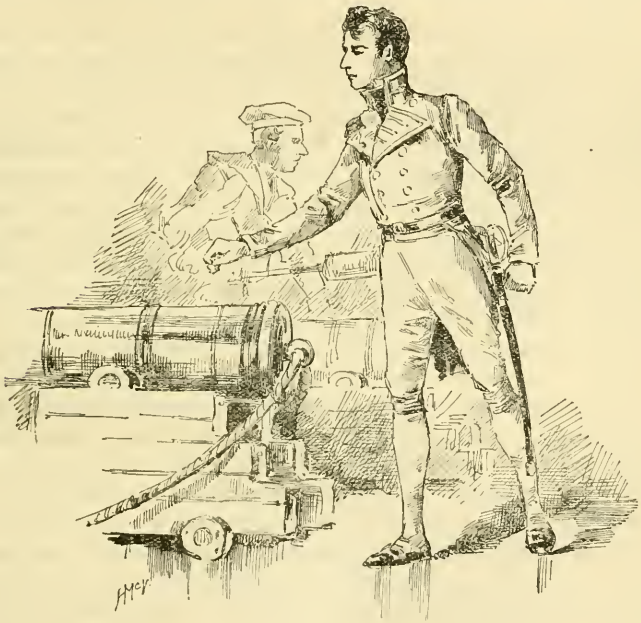
A boat with two British lieutenants and several midshipmen on board speedily boarded the "Chesapeake," and the demand for the deserters was renewed. Four seamen were seized, and borne away in triumph; but the British commander refused to receive the ship as a prize, and even went so far as to express his regret at the loss of life, and proffer his aid in repairing the damages. Both sympathy and assistance were indignantly rejected; and the disgraced ship went sullenly back to Norfolk, bearing a sorely mortified body of officers and seamen. Of the four kidnapped



THE ONLY SHOT OF THE "CHESAPEAKE"

sailors, it may be stated here, that one was hanged, and the other three forced to enter the British service, in which one died. His comrades, five years later, were restored to the deck of the ship from which they had been taken.

The news of this event spread like wildfire over the country, and caused rage and resentment wherever it was known. Cities, towns,



LIEUT. ALLEN FIRES A SHOT.

and villages called for revenge. The President issued a proclamation, complaining of the habitual insolence of British cruisers, and ordering all such vessels to leave American waters forthwith. As in the reduced state of the navy it was impossible to enforce this order, he forbade all citizens of the United States to give aid to, or have any intercourse with, any such vessels or their crews. War measures were taken both

by the Federal and State Governments. As usual, the popular wrath was vented upon the least culpable of the people responsible for the condition of the "Chesapeake." Commodore Barron was tried by court-martial, and sentenced to five years' suspension from the service, without pay. The cool judgment of later years perceives the unjustness of this sentence, but its execution cast a deep shadow over the remainder of the unhappy officer's life.

For some years after this episode, little occurred to change the relations of the two nations. The war spirit grew slowly, and was kept alive by the occasional reports of impressments, or the seizure of American ships by British privateers. The navy held its place amid the national defences, although a plan devised by President Jefferson came near putting an end to the old organization. This plan provided for the construction of great numbers of small gunboats, which should be stationed along the coast, to be called out only in case of attack by an armed enemy. A contemporary writer, describing the beauties of this system, wrote, "Whenever danger shall menace any harbor, or any foreign ship shall insult us, somebody is to inform the governor, and the governor is to desire the marshal to call upon the captains of militia to call upon the drummers to beat to arms, and call the militia men together, from whom are to be *drafted* (not impressed) a sufficient number to go on board the gunboats, and drive the hostile stranger away, unless during this long ceremonial he should have taken himself off." Fortunately the gunboat system did not work the total extinction of the old navy.

In 1811 the British aggressions began again, and the situation became more and more warlike. So bold had the privateers become, that they captured a richly laden vessel within thirty miles of New York. Shortly after, the British frigate "Guerriere" stopped an American brig eighteen miles from New York, and took from her a young sailor. The sea was running very rough, and a stiff breeze blowing, when the "Spitfire" was halted by the frigate; but the American captain went with the captured lad to the war-vessel, and assured the commander that he had known the young man as a native of Maine from his boyhood. The reply was, "All that may be so; but he has no protection, and that is enough for me." With these memories fresh, it is not surprising that Americans rejoiced when the news of an encounter terminating in favor of the United States ship was received.

On May 7, 1811, the United States frigate "President" was lying quietly at anchor off Fort Severn, Annapolis. Every thing betokened a state of perfect peace. The muzzles of the great guns were stopped by tompions. The ports were down. In the rigging of the vessel hung garments drying in the sun. At the side floated half a dozen boats. Many of the crew were ashore on leave. The sailing-master was at Baltimore, and the chaplain and purser were at Washington. From the masthead floated the broad pennant of Commodore Rodgers, but he was with his family at Havre de Grace; and the executive officer, Capt. Ludlow, was dining on the sloop-of-war "Argus," lying near at hand. But the captain's dinner was destined to be interrupted that bright May afternoon; for in the midst of the repast a midshipman entered, and reported that the commodore's gig was coming up rapidly, with Rodgers himself on board. The dinner party was hastily broken up, and the captain returned to his ship to receive his superior officer. On his arrival, Commodore Rodgers said that he had received orders to chase the frigate that had impressed the sailor from the "Spitfire," and insist upon the man's being liberated, if he could prove his citizenship. This was good news for every man on the frigate. At last, then, the United States was going to protect its sailors.

Three days were spent in getting the crew together and preparing for sea; then the stately frigate, with all sails set and colors flying, weighed anchor, and stood down the Chesapeake with the intention of cruising near New York. She had been out on the open ocean only a day, when the lookout, from his perch in the crosstrees, reported a strange sail on the horizon. The two vessels appoached each other rapidly; and, as the stranger drew near, Rodgers saw, by the squareness of her yards and the general trim, symmetrical cut of her sails, that she was a war-vessel. Perhaps she may be the offender, thought he, and watched eagerly her approach.

As the stranger came up, the "President" set her broad pennant and ensign; on seeing which the stranger hoisted several signal flags, the significance of which was not understood by the Americans. Finding her signals unanswered, the stranger wore ship, and bore away to the southward, hotly followed by the "President." During all these manœuvres, Rodgers's suspicion of the strange vessel had increased; and her apparent

flight only convinced him the more of the hostile character of the stranger. It was a stern chase and a long one, for at the outset the stranger was hull down on the horizon. After an hour it became evident that the "President" was gaining, for the hull of the fugitive was plainly seen. The breeze then died away, so that night had fallen over the waters before the ships were within hailing distance.

A little after eight in the evening the "President" was within a hundred yards of the chase, which could be seen, a dark mass with bright lights shining through the rows of open ports, rushing through the water directly ahead. Rodgers sprang upon the taffrail, and putting a speaking-trumpet to his lips, shouted, "What ship is that?" A dead silence followed. Those on the "President" listened intently for the answer; but no sound was heard save the sigh of the wind through the cordage, the creaking of the spars, and the rush of the water alongside. Rodgers hailed again; and, before the sound of his words had died away, a quick flash of fire leaped from the stern-ports of the chase, and a shot whizzed through the rigging of the "President," doing some slight damage. Rodgers sprang to the deck to order a shot in return; but, before he could do so, a too eager gunner pulled the lanyard of his piece in the second division of the "President's" battery. The enemy promptly answered with three guns, and then let fly a whole broadside, with discharges of musketry from the deck and the tops. This exhausted Rodgers's patience. "Equally determined," said he afterwards, "not to be the aggressor, or to suffer the flag of my country to be insulted with impunity, I gave a general order to fire." This time there was no defect in the ordnance or the gunnery of the American ship. The thunderous broadsides rang out at regular intervals, and the aim of the gunners was deliberate and deadly. It was too dark to see what effect the fire was having on the enemy, but in five minutes her responses began to come slowly and feebly. Unwilling to continue his attack on a ship evidently much his inferior in size and armament, Rodgers ordered the gunners to cease firing; but this had hardly been done when the stranger opened again. A second time the guns of the "President" were run out, and again they began their cannonade. The stranger was soon silenced again; and Commodore Rodgers hailed, that he might learn the name of his adversary. In answer came a voice from the other vessel, —

"We are his Majesty's ship ——." A gust of wind carried away the name, and Rodgers was still in doubt as to whom he had been fighting. Hoisting a number of bright lights in her rigging, that the stranger might

COMMODORE RODGERS HAILS

know her whereabouts, the "President" stood off and on during the night, ready to give aid to the disabled ship in case of need.

At early dawn every officer was on deck, anxious to learn the fate of their foe of the night before. Far in the distance they could see a ship,

whose broken cordage and evident disorder showed her to have been the other party to the fight. A boat from the "President" visited the stranger, to learn her name and to proffer aid in repairing the damages received in the action. The ship proved to be the British sloop-of-war "Little Belt;" and her captain stated that she was much damaged in her masts, sails, rigging, and hull, and had been cut several times between wind and water. He declined the proffered aid, however, and sailed away to Halifax, the nearest British naval station. Commodore Rodgers took the "President" to the nearest American port.

When the "President" reached home, and the news of her exploit became known, the exultation of the people was great, and their commendations of Rodgers loud. "At last," they cried, "we have taught England a lesson. The insult to the 'Chesapeake' is now avenged." Rodgers protested that he had been forced unwillingly into the combat, but his admirers insisted that he had left port with the intention of humbling the pride of some British ship. Indeed, the letter of an officer on the "President," printed in "The New York Herald" at the time, rather supported this theory. "By the officers who came from Washington," wrote this gentleman, "we learn that we are sent in pursuit of a British frigate, who had impressed a passenger from a coaster. Yesterday, while beating down the bay, we spoke a brig coming up, who informed us that she saw the British frigate the day before off the very place where we now are; but she is not now in sight. We have made the most complete preparations for battle. Every one wishes it. She is exactly our force; but we have the "Argus" with us, which none of us are pleased with, as we wish a fair trial of courage and skill. Should we see her, I have not the least doubt of an engagement. The commodore will demand the person impressed; the demand will doubtless be refused, and the battle will instantly commence. . . . The commodore has called in the boatswain, gunner, and carpenter, informed them of all circumstances, and asked if they were ready for action. Ready, was the reply of each."

No consequences beyond an intensifying of the war spirit in America followed this rencounter. Before dismissing the subject, however, it is but fair to state that the account as given here is in substance Commodore Rodgers's version of the matter. The British captain's report was

quite different. He insisted that the "President" fired the first shot, that the action continued nearly an hour, that it was his hail to which no attention was paid, and finally he intimated that the "President" had rather the worse of the encounter. The last statement is easily disproved, for the "President" was almost unscathed, and the only injury to her people was the slight wounding of a boy, in the hand. On the "Little Belt," thirty-one were killed or wounded. The other points led to a simple question of veracity between the two officers. Each government naturally accepted the report of its officer; and, so far as the governments were concerned, the matter soon passed into oblivion.

Not long after this episode, a somewhat similar occurrence took place, but was happily attended with no such serious consequences. The frigate "United States," cruising under the broad pennant of Commodore Decatur, fell in with two British ships near New York. While the commanders of the vessels were amicably hailing, a gun was suddenly fired from the battery of the "United States," owing to the carelessness of a gunner in handling the lanyard. It was a critical moment, for the British would have been justified in responding to the fire with broadsides. Happily, they were cool and discreet, and Decatur made such explanations as showed that no attack or insult was intended. This little incident is interesting, as showing the distrust of the British which led an American captain to keep his guns primed and cocked, while conversing with English men-of-war.

Another incident showed that the hatred of the British service that prevailed among seamen was a matter of deep-seated conviction. While the United States ship "Essex" was lying in an English port, it became known that one of her crew was a deserter from the British navy, and his surrender was immediately demanded. Although the man stoutly protested that he was an American, yet no proof could be shown; and, as the ship was in British waters, it was determined to surrender him. A British officer and squad of marines boarded the "Essex" and waited on the deck while the sailor went below to get his kit. Bitterly complaining of the hardness of his fate, the poor fellow went along the gun-decks until he passed the carpenter's bench. His eye fell upon an axe; and after a minute's hesitation he stepped to the bench, seized the axe in his right hand, and with one blow cut off the left. Carrying the severed

member in his hand, he again sought the deck and presented himself, maimed, bleeding, and forever useless as a sailor, to the British officer. Astonished and horrified, that worthy left the ship, and the wounded man was sent to the sick-bay. The incident was a forcible commentary on the state of the British service at that time, and left a deep impression on the minds of all beholders.

In the next contest over deserters, however, the Americans rather secured the best of the argument. The "Constitution" was lying at anchor in Portsmouth roads, when one of the crew slily slipped overboard and swam down with the tide to the British ship "Madagascar" that lay at anchor near by. When he had reached the Englishman, he was too exhausted to speak; and the officers, supposing that he had fallen overboard accidentally, sent word to the "Constitution" that her man had been saved, and awaited the orders of his commander. The next morning a boat was sent down to the "Madagascar" to fetch the man back; but, to the astonishment of the visiting officer, he was told that the sailor claimed to be a British subject and wished to escape from the American service.

"Have you any evidence," asked the American officer of the British admiral, "beyond the man's own word, that he is an Englishman?"

"None whatever, sir," was the response, "but we are obliged to take his declaration to that effect."

The American officer returned to his ship, vowing vengeance on the harborers of the deserter. His opportunity came that very night.

In the dead watches of the night, when all was still on deck save the monotonous tramp of the sentries, there suddenly rang out on the still air the sharp crack of a musket. The officer of the deck rushed to see what was the matter, and was shown a dark object floating near the ship, at which a sentry had fired. A boat was lowered and soon came back, bringing in it a sailor who had deserted from the "Madagascar," and reached the "Constitution" by swimming. Capt. Hull asked the fellow his nationality.

"Sure, O'im a 'Merricun, your honor," he answered in a rich brogue that would have branded him as a Paddy in any part of the world. With a twinkle in his eye, Hull sent the Irishman below, and told the sailors to take good care of him.

Early in the morning, a boat came from the "Madagascar;" and a trim young lieutenant, clambering aboard the American frigate, politely requested that the deserter be given up. With great dignity, Capt. Hull responded that the man was a citizen of the United States, and should have protection. The visiting officer fairly gasped for breath. "An American!" he exclaimed. "Why, the man has never been out of Ireland except on a British man-of-war."

"Indeed!" responded Hull blandly. "But we have his statement that he is an American, and we are obliged to take his declaration to that effect." And the man was never given up.

During the day, two British frigates cast anchor so near the "Constitution" that Capt. Hull suspected them of hostile intentions, and moved his ship to a new anchorage. A frigate followed closely in her wake. At eight in the evening, Capt. Hull determined to meet the show of force with force. The drums beat, and the men were called to quarters. The battle-lanterns were lighted fore and aft. The tops were crowded with sailors, armed with short carbines, to pick off the men on the enemy's decks. Along the gun-deck stood the men at the guns; and an officer, describing the scene, says they took hold of the ropes as if they were about to jerk the guns through the ship's sides. All were enthusiastic over the prospect of the coming action.

"Now, then, my lads," said an officer to a group of sailors, "if a fight comes of this, it will be in the cause of you sailors; and I expect you to fight like men."

"Ay, ay, sir," was the response. "Let the quarter-deck look out for the colors, and we'll keep the guns going."

All the preparations for battle were made openly, and the attitude taken by the "Constitution" was an open challenge. No notice of it was taken by the British ship; and, after maintaining her hostile attitude for some time, the "Constitution" hoisted her anchor, and left the harbor.

The time of the formal declaration of war was now rapidly approaching. The long diplomatic correspondence between the two nations had failed to lead to any amicable solution of the difficulties that were fast urging them to war. Great Britain still adhered to her doctrine that a man once an Englishman was always an English subject. No action of

his own could absolve him from allegiance to the flag under which he was born. Upon the trade of the United States with France, the English looked with much the sentiments with which, during our civil war, we regarded the thriving trade driven with the Confederacy by the British blockade-runners. Upon these two theories rested the hateful "right of search" and the custom of impressment.

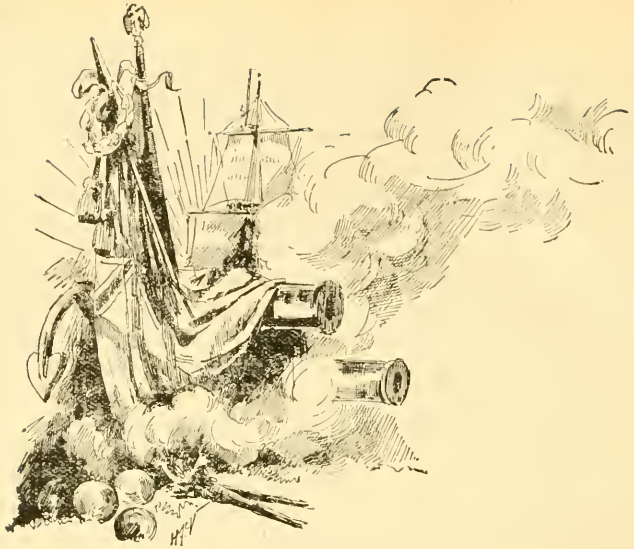
It is needless to say that the views of the United States on these questions were exactly contrary to those of the English. Such vital differences could, then, only be settled by war; and war was accordingly declared in June, 1812. It was a bold step for the young nation, but there was enough of plausibility in the English claims to make it evident that they could never be set aside by diplomacy; and so, with hardly a thought of the odds against her, the United States dashed in to win justice at the muzzles of her cannon.

That the odds were tremendous, is not to be denied. Of the military strength of the two nations, it is not the purpose of this book to treat. Indeed, a recountal of the land battles of the war of 1812 would hardly be pleasant reading for Americans. It was on the sea that our laurels were chiefly won. Yet, at the time of the declaration of war, the navy of the United States consisted of twenty vessels, of which the largest carried forty-four guns, and the majority rated under thirty. For years this navy had been a butt of ridicule for all the European naval powers. The frigate "Constitution" was scornfully termed by an English newspaper "a bunch of pine boards sailing under a bit of striped bunting." Not long after the publication of this insolent jeer, the "Constitution" sailed into an American port with a captured British frigate in tow. Right merrily then did the Americans boast of their "bunch of pine boards."

This miniature navy of the United States was about to be pitted against the greatest naval power of the world. The rolls of the navy of Great Britain bore at this time the names of over one thousand ships. Of these, no less than two hundred and fifty-four were ships-of-the-line, mounting over seventy-four guns each. Behind this great navy were the memories of long years of conquests, of an almost undisputed supremacy upon the ocean. Small wonder was it, then, that the British laughed at the idea of the Americans giving battle to their hitherto unconquered ships.

What, then, was the secret of the success which, as we shall see, attended the American arms on the sea? The answer is, that men, not ships, carried the day. Yet Great Britain had the more sailors on her muster-rolls. True, but they were only too often unwilling slaves. Instead of enlisting, like free men, they were hunted down like brutes and forced to enter the service. No sailor was safe from the press-gang, and even sober citizens were often kidnapped to serve the 'King' on the ocean. From the ships of other nations, from their homes and from taverns, the unlucky sailors were dragged away. Even in the streets of populous cities, they were not safe; and it was no uncommon sight to see pitched battles being fought between the press-gangs and sailors whom they were trying to capture. Generally, the inhabitants and landsmen sided with the victims; and a sailor running through the streets of the town would be given every assistance by people, who filled with obstacles the path of his pursuers. Could he reach the water-side, the fugitive would find every boat at his service; while his pursuers, on coming up, found every water-man very busy and very gruff. But the wonder is, that with this unjust and repulsive system of impressments, the British sailors were so loyal, and fought with the dogged courage that they invariably showed.

In the American navy, on the contrary, the enlistments were voluntary. The service was popular, and the seamen entered it without the feeling of outraged liberty inspired by the British system. Officers were readily obtained from the ranks of the adventurous American navigators. Officers and men alike often brought into the service personal memories of British oppression; and this, with their free and independent spirit, enabled them to wage an unequal war with glorious results for the supporters of the stars and stripes.



## CHAPTER IV

THE WAR ON THE OCEAN.—COMMODORE RODGERS'S CRUISE.—THE LOSS OF THE "NAUTILUS."—FIRST SUCCESS FOR THE BRITISH.—THE ESCAPE OF THE "CONSTITUTION."—THE "ESSEX" TAKES THE "ALERT."—THE "CONSTITUTION AND THE "GUERRIERE."

AT the time when the declaration of war was made public, a small squadron of United States vessels was lying in the port of New York, under the command of Commodore Rodgers The warlike tendency of the popular mind had long been evident, and the captain of every war-vessel had been for some time making active preparations for service. Some apprehension was felt in naval circles, lest the small size of the navy should lead the authorities to lay up the vessels in port during the continuance of the war. This apprehension was well founded; for not only had such a course been debated in the cabinet, but orders had been prepared, directing Commodore Rodgers to hold his vessels in port. This decision was actively opposed

by the officers of the navy, who felt that, though inconsiderable in numbers, the United States navy could make a brave fight for the honor of the nation; and with one accord all protested against the action contemplated. Two officers, Capt. Bainbridge and Capt. Stewart, went to Washington and sought an interview with the Secretary of the Navy, Paul Hamilton, who assured them that the plans of the Government were well matured and would not be changed. The United States could not afford, said the secretary, that its few frigates and men-of-war should be snapped up by the enormous fleets of the British, as would surely be the case, if they ventured upon the ocean. But it was not intended to materially reduce the lists of naval officers. The frigates, with all their loose spars and top-hamper taken down, were to be anchored at the entrances of the principal harbors of the country, and operated as stationary batteries.

This prospect was far from agreeable to the two officers. It was intolerable for them to imagine the graceful frigates, with towering masts and snowy canvas, reduced to mere shapeless hulks, and left to guard the entrance of a placid harbor. Finding the secretary inexorable, they went to the President and put the case before him. They assured him, that, small though the list of American ships was, it bore the names of vessels able to cope with any thing of their class in the British navy. Both officers and seamen were proud of the service, and burned to strike a blow for its honor. President Madison seemed much impressed by their representations, and agreed to take the matter into consideration; and, if it seemed wise, to change the plan. But, before any definite action was taken by him, war was declared.

Within an hour after he had received news of the declaration of war, Commodore Rodgers had his squadron under way, and dropped down New York Bay to the ocean. Under his command were the flag-ship "President" of forty-four guns, the "Essex" thirty-two, and the "Hornet" eighteen. In the lower bay these vessels were joined by the "United States" forty-four, the "Congress" thirty-eight, and the "Argus" sixteen. On June 21, 1812, three days after the declaration of war, the whole squadron passed Sandy Hook, and stood out into the ocean.

It is probable that the remarkable celerity of Commodore Rodgers's departure was due, in part, to the fear that the authorities would revive the obnoxious order laying up the ships in port. His chief object, how-

ever, was to overhaul a large fleet of British merchantmen that had recently left the West Indies, and, according to all calculations, should have been in the vicinity of New York at that time. All sail was accordingly crowded upon the ships, and the squadron set out in hot pursuit.

For two days the monotony of the horizon was broken by no sail; but on the third a ship was espied in the distance, which was made out to be an enemy's frigate, after which chase was made by the whole squadron. A fresh breeze was blowing, and both chase and pursuers were running free before the wind. As sail after sail was crowded upon the ships, the smaller vessels, with their lesser expanse of canvas, began to fall behind; and in a few hours the frigate "President" had gradually drawn away from the fleet, and was rapidly gaining on the enemy. The sail had been spied at six o'clock in the morning, and at four P.M. the flag-ship had come within gunshot of the chase. The wind then fell; and the chase, being long out of port and light, began to gain on her heavier adversary. Both vessels now began to prepare for a little gunnery. On the English vessel, which proved to be the "Belvidera," thirty-six, the sailors were busily engaged in shifting long eighteens and carronades to the stern, making a battery of stern-chasers mounting four guns.

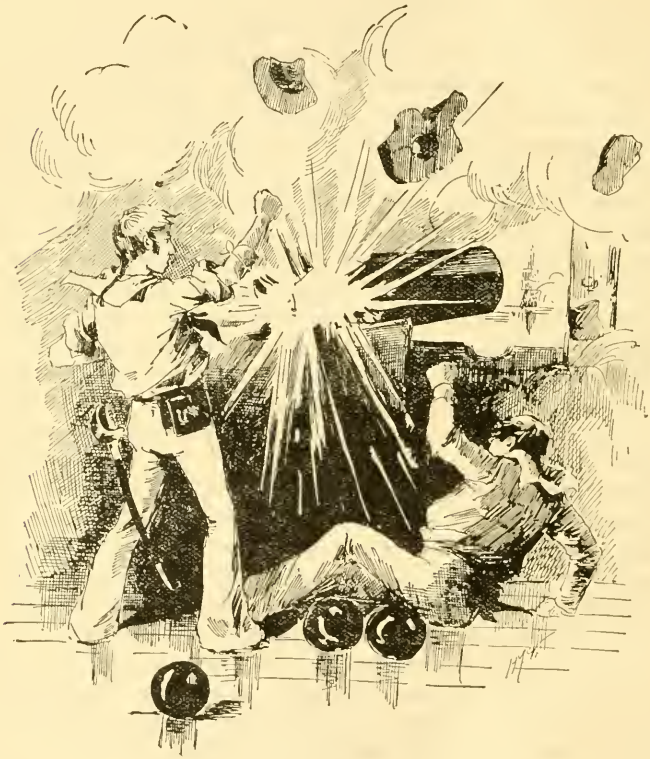
The action was opened by a gun from the bow of the "President," sighted and fired by Commodore Rodgers himself; so that this officer may be said to have fired the first gun of the war. His shot was a good one, hulling the enemy. A second shot from one of the guns of the first division broke off the muzzle of one of the "Belvidera's" stern-chasers; and a third shot, fired by Commodore Rodgers, crashed into the stern of the chase, killing two men, and wounding several others. Certainly in their first action the Yankees showed no lack of skill in gunnery.

The chase was slow in responding to the fire; and although her commander, Capt. Byron, sighted the guns for the first few discharges himself, his aim was by no means so good as that of the Americans. The British showed great energy, however, in defending their ship. Not content with the stern guns already mounted, they shifted to the stern ports two long eighteen-pounders on the main deck, and two thirty-two-pound carronades on the quarter-deck. With these they kept up a brisk fire, which soon became effective, many shots cutting the rigging of the "President," while

one plunged down upon the deck, killing a midshipman and two or three men. But the superiority of the American gunnery was beginning to tell, when, at a critical moment, a main-deck gun, on the "President," burst with a stunning report; and the flying fragments killed or wounded sixteen men. The force of the explosion shattered the forecastle deck. Commodore Rodgers was thrown high into the air, and, falling heavily on the deck, suffered a painful fracture of the leg. The crew was at once thrown into confusion and almost panic. Every gun was looked upon with suspicion. Encouraged by this confusion, the enemy worked his stern guns with renewed vigor, and at the same time lightened his ship by cutting away boats and anchors, and starting fourteen tons of water. Thus lightened, she began to draw away from the "President;" perceiving which, the latter ship yawed several times, and let fly full broadsides at the escaping chase. The shot rattled among the spars of the "Belvidera," but the nimble topmen quickly repaired all damages; and the British ship slowly but steadily forged ahead. Seeing no hope of overtaking her, Rodgers ordered the chase abandoned; and the American squadron again took up its search for the fleet of British merchantmen.

But this, the first cruise of the United States navy in the war was destined to be a disappointment to all concerned. The key-note set by the affair just related — in which the "President" lost twenty-two men, and permitted her adversary to escape — was continued throughout the voyage. Always finding traces of the enemy they were seeking, the Americans never succeeded in overhauling him. One day great quantities of orange-peel, cocoanut-shells, and similar fragments of tropical fruits gave the jackies assurance of the proximity of the long-sought enemy, and urged them on to renewed energy and watchfulness. Then the master of an English letter-of-marque, captured by the "Hornet," reported that the day before he had passed a fleet of eighty-five sail, of which four were men-of-war. That night there was no room in the minds of the sailors for any thoughts other than those of big prize-money. But their golden dreams were never to be fulfilled; for, although the chase was continued until within a day's run of the English Channel, no sight of the Jamaica fleet was ever gained. Abandoning this chase, the squadron returned to Boston by a Southern route; and, although constantly in the very highway of commerce, few sails were sighted. When port was

reached, the results of a cruise that had occupied seventy days amounted only to the capture of one letter-of-marque, seven merchantmen, and the recapture of one American ship. But Rodgers heard, that, while he



EXPLOSION ON THE "PRESIDENT."

had been scouring the ocean with such meagre results, events of more importance had occurred nearer home.

The British ship "Belvidera," after her lucky escape from the "President," had made her way to Halifax, the chief naval station of Great Britain on the American coast. Her report was the first news of the

declaration of war, for at that day news travelled slowly. Once alarmed, the British were prompt to act; and in a few days a squadron left Halifax in search of Commodore Rodgers. The force thus hurriedly gathered was quite formidable. The "Africa" of sixty-four guns, the "Shannon," thirty-eight, the "Guerriere," thirty-eight, the "Belvidera," thirty-six, and the "Æolus," thirty-two, made up the fleet despatched to chastise the headstrong Americans for their attempt to dispute with Great Britain the mastery of the ocean. Early in July, this force made its appearance off New York, and quickly made captures enough to convince the American merchantmen that a season in port was preferable to the dangers of the high seas in war-times. To this same fleet belongs the honor of the first capture of a war-vessel during the war; for the American brig "Nautilus," fourteen guns, was suddenly overhauled by the entire fleet, and captured after a plucky but unavailing attempt at flight.

Fourteen-gun brigs, however, were rather small game for a squadron like that of the British; and it is probable that His Britannic Majesty's officers were heartily glad, when, some days, later the United States frigate "Constitution" hove in sight, under circumstances which seemed certain to make her an easy prey to the five British ships.

It was on the 17th of July, 1812, that the "Constitution," after receiving a new crew at Annapolis, was standing northward under easy sail on her way to New York. About noon four sails were sighted on the horizon, and an hour later the appearance of a fifth sail was duly reported. A careful scrutiny of the strangers convinced Capt. Hull that they were men-of-war, although their nationality could not be determined. Night fell before the ships could come within hailing distance; and, though Hull set private signals, no answer was returned. When day broke, Hull found himself fairly surrounded by British frigates. In addition to the squadron which has been described as leaving Halifax, there was the captured "Nautilus" with her guns turned against her own nation, and a captured American schooner which had been likewise pressed into the service. Clearly the "Constitution" was outnumbered, and nothing was left for her but flight.

The events of that three days' chase are told with great minuteness in the log-book of the "Constitution," to which many of those on board have, in later publications, added more interesting personal reminiscences.

When the rising mists showed how completely the American frigate was hemmed in, hardly a breath of air was stirring. Although every sail was set on the ship, yet she had not steerage way; and Hull ordered out the boats, to pull the ship's head around and tow her out of range of her enemies. At the same time, gangs of sailors with axes cut away the woodwork about the cabin windows, and mounted two stern guns in the cabin and one on the upper deck. The enemy, in the mean time, were keeping up a vigorous fire, but without effect. Their ships were rapidly gaining, as they were enabled to set the boats of the whole squadron to towing the two foremost vessels. Hull saw that some new means of getting ahead must be devised.

Soundings were taken, and the ship found to be in twenty-six fathoms of water. All the available rope in the ship was then bent on to a kedge and carried far ahead, when the kedge was lowered to the bottom. The sailors then shipped their capstan-bars, and tramped about the capstan, until the ship was dragged up to the kedge, which was then hoisted and again carried ahead and let fall. This manœuvre was repeated several times with marked success; for the "Constitution" was rapidly drawing away from her pursuers, who could not discover her means of propulsion. Out of sight of land as they were, the British did not for some time suspect the true cause of the sudden speed of the fugitive. When, after long scrutiny through their marine-glasses, they finally did discover the stratagem, the "Constitution" was far ahead; and though the pursuers adopted the same device, yet their awkwardness was so great, that even the superior force they were enabled to employ did not bring them up to their chase.

While the ships were thus being urged on by towing, kedging, and occasionally by sweeps, an intermittent fire was kept up by the British, and responded to by the "Constitution" from her stern ports. The guns which had been mounted by the Americans in the cabin, they were soon forced to abandon, as the explosions threatened to blow out the whole stern frame. With the stern-chasers on the gun-deck, however, a constant fire was maintained, in the hopes of crippling the enemy by a lucky shot.

For more than forty-eight hours the chase maintained this aspect of monotony. A dead calm prevailed the greater part of the time. Occasionally, light breezes filled the sails, and wafted the ships ahead for a

few minutes; then, dying away, left the sea unruffled, and the sails flapping idly against the masts. British historians concur with those of our own country, in saying that the "Constitution," in seizing the advantages of the breeze, showed far better seamanship than did her enemies. While the British vessels lay to, to pick up their boats, the "Constitution" forged ahead, picking up her boats while under way. Later in the chase, the British totally abandoned their boats, and, when the American frigate had fairly escaped them, went about for some days picking up such boats as were found drifting on the broad ocean.

The morning of the second day of the chase dawned with a light breeze ruffling the water, and filling out the sails of the ships. Before the breeze died away, which it did in a few hours, the "Constitution" had gained on her pursuers so that she led them by more than four miles. Then the calm again held the ships quiet; and again the Americans saw their enemies closing in upon them by the aid of sweeps, and towing with their boats. There was little rest for the crew of the American frigate. On the gun-deck, about the carriages of the great cannon, lay such of the men as were not assigned to duty in the boats or at the capstan. Wearied with the constant strain, they fell asleep as soon as relieved from active duty; though they knew that from that sleep they might be awakened to plunge into the fierce excitement of desperate battle. Exhausted as the men were, their officers were forced to endure a still more fearful strain. No sleep came to the eyelids of Capt. Hull, throughout the chase. Now encouraging the men, now planning a new ruse to deceive the enemy, ever watchful of the pursuing ships, and ready to take advantage of the slightest breath of air, Capt. Hull and his able first lieutenant Morris showed such seamanship as extorted admiration even from the British, who were being baffled by their nautical skill.

By skilful manœuvring, the Americans managed to keep to the windward of their enemies throughout the chase; and to this fact the success of Capt. Hull's most astute stratagem was due. Ever alert for any sign of a coming breeze, he saw on the water far to windward that rippling appearance that betokens the coming of a puff. Hull determined to utilize it for himself, and, if possible, trick the British so that they would lose all benefit of the breeze. The clouds that were coming up to windward

seemed to threaten a squall, and driving sheets of rain were rapidly advancing toward the ship. With great ostentation, the "Constitution" was made ready for a severe gale. The enemy could see the nimble sailors taking in sail, and furling all the lighter canvas. Then the driving rain swept over the ship, and she was shut out of sight. Immediately all was activity in the tops of the British frigates. Reefs were rapidly taken in the larger sails, while many were closely furled. All forsook their course, and steered in different directions in preparation for the coming squall, which, indeed, was far less violent than the action of the "Constitution" seemed to indicate. But the shrewd Yankees on that craft, protected from spying British eyes by the heavy rain, were now shaking out the reefs they had just set; and under full sail the ship was soon flying away towards home. After an hour of driving thunder-shower, the clouds passed by; and the wall-like edge of the shower could be seen moving rapidly away before the wind. The tars on the "Constitution" watched eagerly to see the British fleet appear. Farther and farther receded the gray curtain, and yet no ships could be seen. "Where are they?" was the thought of every eager watcher on the deck of the "Constitution." At last they appeared, so far in the distance as to be practically out of the chase. Two were even hull down; while one was barely visible, a mere speck on the horizon.

Though now hopelessly distanced, the British did not give up the pursuit, but held valiantly on after the American frigate. She had so long been within their very grasp that it was a bitter disappointment for them to be balked of their prey. But, as the wind now held, the American gained on them so rapidly that at last they unwillingly abandoned the chase; and, disbanding the fleet, each ship set off on an individual cruise, in the hopes that the enemy which had shown such ability in flight when overpowered would not deign to fly if encountered by a single hostile ship. This expectation was fully realized some weeks later, when the "Constitution" fell in with the British frigate "Guerriere."

Thus, after a chase of more than sixty-four hours, the "Constitution" evaded her pursuers, and made her way to Boston. Although they reaped no glory by their labors, the British did not come out of the chase altogether empty-handed. As the course of the vessels was along the New England coast, they were in the direct path of American commerce; and more than one wretched coaster fell into their clutches. At one time, a

fine, full-rigged ship, flying the stars and stripes, came within sight; and the British, to lure her to her destruction, hoisted the American flag over all their vessels. But Hull was a match for them at strategy; and he promptly set the British colors at his masthead, and began so vigorous a cannonade that the stranger concluded that a merchantman had no business in that quarter, even though the Americans did appear to be rather in the majority.

By his able seamanship in this chase Capt. Hull gained for himself a national reputation. The newspapers of the day vied with each other in pointing out the manœuvres in which he had excelled his enemies, — how he had picked up his boats while under way, though the enemy were forced to cut theirs adrift; how he had come out of the chase without injury, and after parting with only a few gallons of water, though a less cool-headed commander would have thrown overboard guns, ammunition, and every thing movable, in the face of so great a danger. A modest sailor, as well as a skilful one, Capt. Hull showed himself to be; for while the popular adulation was at its height, he inserted a card in the books of the Exchange Coffee-House at Boston, begging his friends to "make a transfer of a great part of their good wishes to Lieut. Morris and the other brave officers and crew under his command, for their very great exertions and prompt attention to orders while the enemy were in chase."

Leaving the "Constitution" thus snugly in port at Boston, we will turn aside to follow the fortunes of a ship, which, though belated in getting out to sea, yet won the honor of capturing the first British war-vessel taken during the war.

When Commodore Rodgers set sail from New York with his squadron, in the fruitless pursuit of the fleet of Jamaica men, he left in the harbor the small frigate "Essex," under the command of Capt. David Porter. The ship was thoroughly dismantled, — stripped of her rigging, her hold broken out, and provided neither with armament, ammunition, nor crew. Her captain, however, was a man of indomitable energy; and by dint of much hard work, and constant appeals to the authorities at Washington, he managed to get his ship in order, and leave the harbor within a fortnight after the departure of the squadron under Rodgers's command.

The "Essex" was a small frigate, lightly sparred, rating as a thirty-two-gun ship, but mounting twenty-six guns only, of which six were

twelve-pounders, and the remainder carronades of thirty-two pounds. A carronade is a short cannon of large calibre, but of very short range. Capt. Porter protested vigorously against being furnished with a battery so useless except at close quarters: but his protests were unheeded; and the "Essex" put to sea, trusting to her ability to get alongside the enemy, where her carronades would be of some use.

Among the midshipmen who bunked, messed, and skylarked together in the steerage of the "Essex," was one lad whose name in later days was to be inscribed on the roll of the greatest naval heroes of history. David Glasgow Farragut was a child of seven years of age when he was adopted by Capt. Porter, and began his training for a naval career. In 1810 the boy secured his appointment of midshipman; and now, in 1812, we find him enrolled among the "young gentlemen" who followed the fortunes of the "Essex." In those days the midshipmen were often mere boys. Farragut himself was then but eleven years old. But, boys as they were, they ordered the hardy old tars about, and strutted the streets when on shore-leave, with all the dignity of veterans.

That the discipline of the "Essex" was of the strictest, and that the efficiency of her crew was above criticism, we have the testimony of Farragut himself to prove. "Every day," he writes, "the crew were exercised at the great guns, small arms, and single stick; and I may here mention the fact, that I have never been on a ship where the crew of the old "Essex" was represented, but that I found them to be the best swordsmen on board. They had been so thoroughly trained as boarders, that every man was prepared for such an emergency, with his cutlass as sharp as a razor, a dirk made by the ship's armorer out of a file, and a pistol."

Hardly were the Highlands of Navesink lost to sight below the horizon, when Porter began to receive evidences that his cruise was to be a lucky one. Several brigs were captured, and sent into New York; but the tars of the "Essex" were beginning to grow weary of small game, and hoped, each time a sail was sighted, that it might be a British man-of-war. At last a small squadron hove into sight, the appearance of which seemed to indicate that the jackies might smell gunpowder to their hearts' content before the next day.

It was late at night when the strange fleet was sighted; and the

"Essex" was soon running down upon them, before a fresh breeze. Although the moon was out, its light was obscured by dense masses of cloud, that were driven rapidly across the sky; while over the water hung a light haze, that made difficult the discovery of objects at any distance. The "Essex" soon came near enough to the squadron to ascertain that it was a fleet of British merchantmen and transports convoyed by a frigate and bomb-vessel. The frigate was at the head of the line; and the "Essex," carefully concealing her hostile character, clapped on all sail and pressed forward, in the hopes of bringing on an action. After passing the hindermost transport, however, the American ship was hailed by a second transport, which soon suspected her hostile character and threatened to give the alarm. Instantly the ports of the "Essex" were knocked out, the guns trained on the enemy, and the transport was ordered to haul out of the line at once, and silently, under penalty of being fired into. The defenceless ship complied, and was at once taken possession of, and the soldiers on board were transferred to the "Essex." This operation took so much time, that, by the time it was concluded, day dawned over the ocean; and the attack upon the British frigate was abandoned.

Again the "Essex" continued her cruise in search of an enemy worthy of her metal. For two or three days she beat about the ocean in the usual track of ships, without sighting a single sail. The ship had been so disguised, that the keenest-eyed lookout would never have taken her for a ship-of-war. The top-gallant masts were housed, the ports of the gun-deck closed in, and her usually trim cordage and nicely squared yards were now set in a way that only the most shiftless of merchant skippers would tolerate. Not many days passed before the enemy fell into the trap thus set for him.

When on the 13th of August Capt. Porter learned that a sail to windward, apparently a British man-of-war, was bearing down upon the "Essex," he carried his little bit of acting still further. Instead of the great crowd of agile sailors that spring into the rigging of a man-of-war, at the order to make sail, only a handful, in obedience to Porter's orders, awkwardly set on the "Essex" all the sail she would carry. Two long, heavy cables dragging in the water astern so retarded the ship, that the stranger, coming down gallantly, thought he had fallen in with a lumber-

ing old American merchantman, which was making frantic, but futile, efforts to escape.

Had the British captain been able to look behind the closed ports of the "Essex," he would have formed a very different idea of the character of his chase. He would have seen a roomy gun-deck, glistening with that whiteness seen only on the decks of well-kept men-of-war. Down either side of the deck stretched a row of heavy carronades, each with its crew of gunners grouped about the breech, and each shotted and primed ready for the opening volley. From the magazine amidships, to the gun-deck, reached a line of stewards, waiters, and cooks, ready to pass up cartridges; for on a man-of-war, in action, no one is an idler. Active boys were skurrying about the deck, barefooted, and stripped to the waist. These were the "powder monkeys," whose duty it would be, when the action opened, to take the cartridges from the line of powder-passers and carry it to the guns. On the spar-deck, only a few sailors and officers were visible to the enemy; but under the taffrail lay crouched scores of blue-uniformed jackies, with smooth-faced middies and veteran lieutenants, ready to spring into the rigging at the word of command, or to swarm over the side and board the enemy, should the gunwales of the vessels touch.

All this preparation, however, was unknown to the "Englishman," who came boldly on, doubting nothing that the "Essex" would that day be added to his list of prizes. As he drew nearer, the American sailors could see that their foe was much their inferior in size and armament; and the old tars who had seen service before growled out their dissatisfaction, that the action should be nothing but a scrimmage after all. In a few minutes, the bold Britons gave three ringing cheers, and let fly a broadside at the "Essex." In an instant the ports of the sham merchantman were knocked out; and, with a war-like thunder, the heavy carronades hurled their ponderous missiles against the side of the assailant. The astonished Englishmen replied feebly, but were quickly driven from their posts by the rapidity of the American fire; and, in eight minutes after the action was opened, the British hauled down their flag. The captured ship proved to be the sloop-of-war "Alert," mounting twenty eighteen-pounder carronades. The boarding officer found her badly cut up, and seven feet of water in the hold. The officers

were transferred to the "Essex," and the "Alert" taken in tow. Circumstances, however, forced the Americans to part in a very few days.

The chief cause which led to the separation of the two vessels was an incipient mutiny, which was discovered by Midshipman Farragut, and was only averted by the perfect discipline of the American crew. An exercise to which the greatest attention was given was the "fire-drill." When the cry of fire was raised on the ship, every man seized his cutlass and blanket, and went to quarters as though the ship were about to go into action. Capt. Porter was accustomed, that his men might be well prepared for any emergency, to raise this cry of fire at all hours of the night; and often he caused a slight smoke to be created in the hold, further to try the nerves of his men. Shortly after the "Alert" was captured, and while the "Essex" was crowded with prisoners, some of the captives conspired to seize the ship, and carry her to England. One night, as Farragut was sleeping in his hammock, a strange feeling of fear came over him; and he opened his eyes to find the coxswain of the captain's gig of the "Alert" standing over him with a pistol in his hand. The boy knew him to be a prisoner, and, seeing him armed, was convinced that something was wrong. Expecting every moment to be killed, he lay still in his hammock, until the man turned on his heel and walked away. Then Farragut slipped out, and ran to the captain's cabin to report the incident. Porter rushed upon the berth-deck in an instant. "Fire! fire!" shouted he at the top of his voice; and in an instant the crew were at their quarters, in perfect order. The mutineers thought that a bad time for their project, and it was abandoned. The next day the prisoners were sent on board the "Alert," and that vessel sent into St. Johns as a cartel.

The capture of the "Alert" reflected no great glory upon the Americans, for the immense superiority of the "Essex" rendered her success certain. It is, however, of interest as being the first capture of a British war-vessel. The action made the honors easy between the two nations; for while the Americans had the "Alert," the British were captors of the brig "Nautilus." This equality was not of long duration, however; for an action soon followed which set all America wild with exultation.

After her escape from the British fleet, the "Constitution" remained at Boston only a few days, and then set out on a cruise to the eastward

along the New England coast. Bad luck seemed to follow her, and she had reached a point off Cape Sable before she made a prize. Here two or three prizes of little value were taken; and an English sloop-of-war was forced to relinquish an American brig, which had been recently captured. Shortly afterwards, a Salem privateer was overhauled, the captain of which reported an English frigate cruising in the neighborhood; and Capt. Hull straightway set out to discover the enemy.

The frigate which had been sighted by the Salem privateer, and for which Hull was so eagerly seeking, was the "Guerriere," a thirty-eight-gun ship commanded by Capt. Dacres. With both ship and captain, Capt. Hull had previously had some little experience. The "Guerriere" was one of the ships in the squadron from which the "Constitution" had so narrowly escaped a few weeks before, while Capt. Dacres was an old acquaintance. A story current at the time relates, that, before the war, the "Guerriere" and the "Constitution" were lying in the Delaware; and the two captains, happening to meet at some entertainment on shore, fell into a discussion over the merits of their respective navies. Although even then the cloud of war was rising on the horizon, each was pleasant and good-natured; and the discussion assumed no more serious form than lively banter.

"Well," said Hull at last, "you may just take good care of that ship of yours, if ever I catch her in the 'Constitution.'"

Capt. Dacres laughed good-humoredly, and offered to bet a sum of money, that in the event of a conflict his confident friend would find himself the loser.

"No," said Hull, "I'll bet no money on it; but I will stake you a hat, that the 'Constitution' comes out victorious."

"Done," responded Dacres; and the bet was made. War was soon declared; and, as it happened, the two friends were pitted against each other early in the hostilities.

It was not long after the American frigate parted from the privateer when the long-drawn hail of "Sail ho-o-o!" from the lookout aloft announced the discovery of another vessel. The course of the "Constitution" was at once shaped toward the stranger. In half an hour she was made out to be a frigate, and from her actions was evidently anxious to come alongside the American ship. As more than an hour must elapse

before the ships could come together, Capt. Hull made his preparations for action with the greatest deliberation. The top-gallant sails were furled, and the lighter spars lowered to the deck. Through their glasses, the officers could see the enemy making similar preparations, and waiting deliberately for the "Constitution" to come down.

At five o'clock in the afternoon the two ships were rapidly nearing, and the drums on the American frigate beat to quarters. Then followed the rush of barefooted men along the deck, as they ran hastily, but in perfect order, to their stations. As the roll of the drums died away, the shrill voices of the boyish midshipmen arose, calling off the quarter-bills, and answered by the gruff responses of the men at their posts. Every man, from the cook to the captain, knew his place, and hurried to it. The surgeon, with his assistants, descended to the cock-pit. The carpenter and his mates made ready their felt-covered plugs, for stopping holes made by the enemy's shot. The topmen clambered to their posts in the rigging, led by the midshipmen who were to command them. The line of powder-passers was formed; and the powder-monkeys gave up skylarking, and began to look sober at the thought of the business in hand.

The "Guerriere" was not behindhand in her preparations for action. Capt. Dacres had suspected the character of the American vessel, from the first moment she had been sighted. On board the English frigate was Capt. William B. Orne, a Marblehead sailor who had been captured by the "Guerriere" some days before. "Capt. Dacres seemed anxious to ascertain her character," wrote Capt. Orne, shortly after the battle, "and after looking at her for that purpose, handed me his spy-glass, requesting me to give him my opinion of the stranger. I soon saw, from the peculiarity of her sails and her general appearance, that she was without doubt an American frigate, and communicated the same to Capt. Dacres. He immediately replied, that he thought she came down too boldly for an American; but soon after added, 'The better he behaves, the more credit we shall gain by taking him.'

"The two ships were rapidly approaching each other, when the 'Guerriere' backed her main topsail, and waited for her opponent to come down and commence the action. He then set an English flag at each masthead, beat to quarters, and made ready for the fight.

"When the strange frigate came down to within two or three miles

distant, he hauled upon the wind, took in all his light sails, reefed his topsails, and deliberately prepared for action. It was now about five in the afternoon, when he filled away and ran down for the 'Guerriere.' At this moment Capt. Dacres said politely to me, 'Capt. Orne, as I suppose you do not wish to fight against your own countrymen, you are at liberty to retire below the water-line.' It was not long after this, before I retired from the quarter-deck to the cock-pit." It may be well here to supplement Capt. Orne's narrative by the statement that Capt. Dacres, with a chivalric sense of justice not common in the British navy of that day, allowed ten American sailors who had been impressed into his crew to leave their quarters and go below, that they might not fight against their country. Though an enemy, he was both gallant and generous.

The action was opened by the "Guerriere" with her weather broadside; the shot of which all falling short, she wore around, and let fly her port broadside, sending most of the shot through her enemy's rigging, though two took effect in the hull. In response to this, the "Constitution" yawed a little, and fired two or three of her bow-guns; after which the "Guerriere" again opened with broadsides. In this way the battle continued for about an hour; the American ship saving her fire, and responding to the heavy broadsides with an occasional shot.

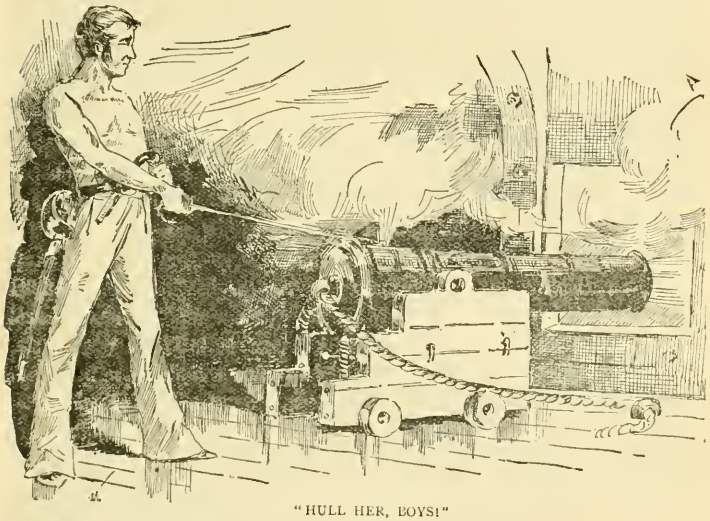
During this ineffectual firing, the two ships were continually drawing nearer together, and the gunners on the "Constitution" were becoming more and more restive under their inaction. Capt. Hull was pacing the quarter-deck with short, quick steps, trying to look cool, but inwardly on fire with excitement. As the shot of the enemy began to take effect, and the impatience of the gunners grew more intense, Lieut. Morris, the second in command, asked leave to respond with a broadside.

"Not yet," responded Capt. Hull with cool decision. Some minutes later, the request was repeated, and met with the same response, while the captain never ceased his pacing of the deck. When within about half pistol-shot, another broadside came from the "Guerriere." Then the smothered excitement in Hull's breast broke out.

"Now, boys, pour it into them!" he shouted at the top of his lungs, gesticulating with such violence that the tight breeches of his naval uniform split clear down the side. Lieut. Morris seconded the captain in cheering on the crew.

"Hull her, boys! Hull her!" he shouted; and the crew, catching up the cry, made the decks ring with shouts of "Hull her!" as they rapidly loaded and let fly again.

The effect of their first broadside was terrific. Deep down in the cock-pit of the "Guerriere," Capt. Orne, who had been listening to the muffled thunder of the cannonade at long range, suddenly "heard a tremendous explosion from the opposing frigate. The effect of her shot seemed to make the 'Guerriere' reel and tremble, as though she had



"HULL HER, BOYS!"

received the shock of an earthquake. Immediately after this, I heard a tremendous shock on deck, and was told that the mizzen-mast was shot away. In a few moments afterward, the cock-pit was filled with wounded men."

Though in his retreat in the cock-pit the captive American could hear the roar of the cannon, and see the ghastly effects of the flying missiles, he could form but a small idea of the fury of the conflict which was raging over his head. Stripped to the waist, and covered with the stains

of powder and of blood, the gunners on the two ships pulled fiercely at the gun-tackle, and wielded the rammers with frantic energy; then let fly the death-dealing bolt into the hull of an enemy only a few yards distant. The ships were broadside to broadside, when the Englishman's mizzen-mast was shot away, and fell, throwing the topmen far out into the sea. The force of the great spar falling upon the deck made a great breach in the quarter of the ship; and, while the sailors were clearing away the wreck, the "Constitution" drew slowly ahead, pouring in several destructive broadsides, and then luffed slowly, until she lay right athwart the enemy's bow. While in this position, the long bowsprit of the "Guerriere" stretched far across the quarter-deck of the American ship, and was soon fouled in the mizzen-rigging of the latter vessel. Then the two ships swung helplessly around, so that the bow of the Englishman lay snugly against the port-quarter of the Yankee craft. Instantly, from the deck of each ship rang out the short, sharp blare of the bugle, calling away the boarders, who sprang from their guns, seized their heavy boarding caps and cutlasses, and rushed to the side. But a heavy sea was rolling and tossing the two frigates, so that boarding seemed impossible; and, as Dacres saw the crowd of men ready to receive his boarders, he called them back to the guns. Although each party stuck to its own ship, the fighting was almost hand to hand. Pistols were freely used; and from the tops rained down a ceaseless hail of leaden missiles, one of which wounded Capt. Dacres slightly. So near to each other were the combatants, that the commands and the cries of rage and pain could be heard above the deep-toned thunder of the great guns and the ceaseless rattle of the musketry. The protruding muzzles of the guns often touched the sides of the opposing ship; and when the cannon were drawn in for loading, the sailors on either side thrust muskets and pistols through the ports, and tried to pick off the enemy at his guns.

While the fight was thus raging, a cry of "Fire!" horrified every one on the "Constitution." Flames were seen coming from the windows of the cabin, which lay directly beneath the bow-guns of the "Guerriere." The fire had been set by the flash from the enemy's cannon, so close were the two ships together. By the strenuous exertions of the men on duty in the cabin, the flames were extinguished, and this, the greatest of all dangers, averted. Shortly after, the gun which had caused the trouble was disabled by a skilful shot from one of the Yankee's guns.

While the flames in the cabin were being extinguished, the Americans were making a valiant attempt to board and Lieut. Morris with his own hands was attempting to lash the two ships together. Abandoning this attempt, he leaped upon the taffrail, and called upon his men to follow him. Lieut. Bush of the marines, and Mr. Alwyn, were soon at the side of the intrepid officer, when, at a sudden volley of musketry from the British, all three fell back, poor Bush dead, and the two others badly wounded. The ships then drifted asunder; and the "Guerriere's" foremast was shot away, and dragged down the mainmast with it in its fall. The shattered ship now lay a shapeless hulk, tossing on the waves, but still keeping a British ensign defiantly flying from the stump of her fallen mizzen-mast.

The "Constitution" drew away, firing continually, and soon secured a raking position; seeing which, the British hauled down their colors. Lieut. Read was sent on board the prize, and, on the appearance of Capt. Dacres, said, —

"Capt. Hull presents his compliments, sir, and wishes to know if ye have struck your flag."

Dacres looked significantly at the shattered masts of his ship, and responded dryly, —

"Well, I don't know. Our mizzen-mast is gone, our main-mast is gone; and I think, on the whole, you may say that we have struck our flag."

After looking about the ship, the boarding officer stepped to the side, to return to his own vessel. Before leaving, he said to Capt. Dacres, —

"Would you like the assistance of a surgeon, or surgeon's mate, in caring for your wounded?"

Dacres looked surprised, and responded, —

"Well, I should suppose you had on board your own ship business enough for all your medical officers."

"Oh, no!" answered Read. "We have only seven wounded, and they have been dressed long ago."

Dacres was astounded, as well he might be; for on the decks of his ship lay twenty-three dead or mortally wounded men, while the surgeons were doing their best to alleviate the sufferings of fifty-six wounded, among whom were several officers. Indeed, the ship looked like a charnel-house. When Capt. Orne, freed by the result of the battle, came on deck, he

saw a sight that he thus describes: "At about half-past seven o'clock, I went on deck, and there beheld a scene which it would be difficult to describe. All the 'Guerriere's' masts were shot away; and, as she had no sails to steady her, she was rolling like a log in the trough of the sea. Many of the men were employed in throwing the dead overboard The decks were covered with blood, and had the appearance of a ship's slaughter-house. The gun-tackles were not made fast; and several of the guns got loose, and were surging from one side to the other. Some of the petty officers and seamen got liquor, and were intoxicated; and what with the groans of the wounded, the noise and confusion of the enraged survivors on board of the ill-fated ship, rendered the whole scene a perfect hell."

For some time after the "Guerriere" had been formally taken possession of, it seemed as though the "Constitution" would have to fight a second battle, to keep possession of her prize. A strange sail was seen upon the horizon, bearing down upon the "Constitution" in a way that seemed to threaten hostilities. Again the drums beat to quarters, and once again the tired crew went to their stations at the guns. But the strange ship sheered off, and the gallant crew were not forced to fight a second battle. All hands then set to work to remove the prisoners from the "Guerriere," which was evidently in a sinking condition.

In the first boat-load from the sinking ship came Capt. Dacres, who was politely shown into Capt. Hull's cabin. Unclasping his sword from its place at his hip, the conquered seaman handed it silently to Capt. Hull. The victor put it gently back, saying, —

"No, no, captain: I'll not take a sword from one who knows so well how to use it. But I will trouble you for that hat."

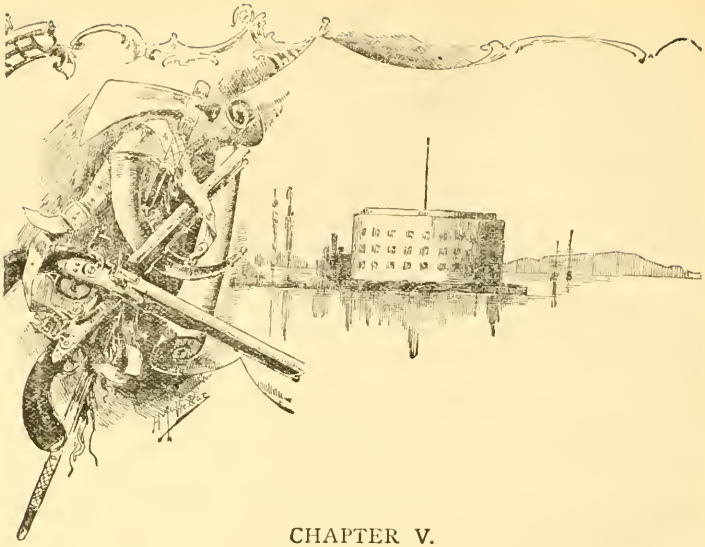
For a moment a shade of perplexity passed over the brow of the British captain; then he recollected the wager of a year or two before, and all was clear again. Unfortunately, the veracious chronicler who has handed this anecdote down to modern times has failed to state whether the debt was duly paid.

After some hours of hard work with the boats, the last of the prisoners, with their effects, were brought on board the "Constitution." Torches were then set to the abandoned frigate; and the sailors watched her blaze, until the fire reached her magazine, and she vanished in the

midst of a tremendous explosion. Then, leaving behind her the floating mass of ruin, the "Constitution" headed for Boston, where she arrived after a few days of sailing.

Great was the excitement and exultation aroused among the people by the arrival of the noble ship with her prisoners. She had, indeed, come at a time when the public mind required cheering; for from the interior came the reports of British successes by land, along the Canadian frontier about Detroit, and for weeks the papers had been unable to record any success for the American arms. But the report of the engagement with the "Guerriere" changed wholly the tide of popular feeling. Boston — the city which at the declaration of war had hung its flags at half-mast, in token of mourning and humiliation — Boston welcomed the conquerors with an ovation like to a triumph in the days of imperial Rome.

When the ship came up the harbor, she was met and surrounded by a great flotilla of gayly decorated boats; while the flags on the surrounding vessels were dipped in salutation as the war-scarred veteran made her stately way to the wharf. Here a volunteer artillery company was assembled; and, as the ship came up, they fired a national salute, which was returned from the guns so lately employed in defending the national honor. Quarters had been prepared for Capt. Hull in the city; and, as he landed, he found the streets through which he must pass decked with bright bunting, and crowded with people. His progress was accompanied by a great wave of cheers; for, as the people saw him coming, they set up a shout, which was not ended until he had passed from sight. At night came a grand banquet to the officers of the ship, at which six hundred sat down to the feast. The freedom of the city was presented to the captain; and at a later date came the news of sword presentations from citizens of New York, plate from the people of Philadelphia, and gold medals from Congress. Amid all the exultation, the rash arrogance of the British writers was not forgotten; and many a bumper was emptied to the success of the frigate described by British journalists as "a bunch of pine boards under a bit of striped bunting."



## CHAPTER V.

AN INTERNATIONAL DEBATE.—THE "WASP" AND THE "FROLIC."—THE "UNITED STATES" AND THE "MACEDONIAN."—OVATIONS TO THE VICTORS.

THE rejoicing over the success of the "Constitution" had not died away in the United States when the English newspapers began to appear with elaborate articles, showing just why the battle had terminated as it did. "The 'Constitution' is the crack frigate of the American navy," cried the apologists; but to this the Americans retorted by quoting the British description of the ship as "a bunch of pine boards." The "Guerriere" was an "old worn-out frigate," responded the English, returning to the charge. "She was on her way to Halifax to refit, when attacked." Again they were refuted by their own statements; for, but a month before, the "Guerriere" was said to be "able to drive the insolent striped bunting from the seas." Throughout the discussion, the shrewdness of the Americans enabled them to meet the arguments of the British at every point; but not until the charge was made, that the "Constitution" was chiefly manned by British sailors, did the people become thoroughly in earnest in the war of words.

Such a charge as this was adding insult to injury. Was not the British navy full of Americans who were forced against their will to serve against their own country, while the few Englishmen on the "Constitution" were enlisted with their own consent? For Capt. Dacres to say that his ship was weakened by allowing the ten Americans to go below, and then beaten by the efforts of the Englishmen on the "Constitution," was merely tantamount to saying that the victory hinged on the fact that Americans would not fight against their own country, while Englishmen did so willingly. But for Great Britain to exclaim against the American navy because it harbored a few Englishmen, was the rankest hypocrisy. So said the American journalists of the day; and, in support of their statement, they printed long letters from American seamen impressed into and held in the British naval service. One writes that he was impressed into his British Majesty's ship "Peacock," in 1810, and after serving two years he heard of the declaration of war. After a consultation with two fellow-seamen, both Americans, all decided to refuse to serve longer, claiming to be prisoners of war. But the captain under whom they were enrolled looked upon the matter in a different light. He heard their claim, pronounced it a bit of "confounded insolence," and straightway ordered that they be put in irons. After some hours for meditation in "the brig," the three sailors were taken to the gangway, stripped naked, and tied up, while a sturdy boatswain's mate laid on a dozen and a half blows of the cat. Later, when the ship went into action with a United States vessel, the three sailors asked to be sent below, that they might not fight against their own countrymen; but the captain's sole response was to call up a midshipman, and order him to do his duty. This duty proved to consist in standing over the three malcontents with a loaded pistol, threatening to blow out the brains of the first who should flinch from his work.

Three sailors were impressed after the war had begun. Learning that the ship on which they found themselves was to cruise upon the American station, they with one accord refused to serve. The response to this was "five dozen lashes well laid on." Being still mutinous, they received four dozen lashes two days later, and after the lapse of two more days were flogged with two dozen more. But all the beating to which they were subjected could not compel them to serve against their country; and they were accordingly ironed and thrown into "the brig," where they

lay for three months. When released from "the brig," they found the ship at London. Here they heard of the glorious victory of the "Constitution," and determined to celebrate it. By ripping up their clothing into strips, and sewing the strips together, a rude American flag was made; and with the most astonishing audacity the three sailors hung this emblem over a gun, and gave three cheers for the stars and stripes. This naturally brought them another flogging.

Flogging, however, could not always be resorted to in order to bring American sailors into subjection. It is estimated, that, when war was declared, there were five times as many American seamen in the British navy as were in the whole navy of the United States. To attempt to keep this immense body of disaffected seamen in order by the lash, would have been impracticable; and soon the custom arose of sending the more refractory tars into confinement at some English prison. Dartmoor prison was for a time the principal place of detention for pressed men; but, as it soon became crowded, it was given over to prisoners of war, and the hapless seamen were sent to languish in dismantled ships, known as "hulks." These hulks were generally old naval vessels, dismasted and stripped of all their fittings. Anchored midstream in tidal rivers, the rotting hulks tugged at their rusty chains, as the tide rose and fell, groaning in their bondage, and seeming as much imprisoned as the wretched sailors by whom they were tenanted. The captives lived in misery and squalor. Crowded together in stifling quarters between decks, they were the prey of vermin of all kinds. Their miserable diet, and lack of proper exercise, caused the scurvy in its most repulsive forms to break out among them. The only breath of fresh air they could obtain was when, in gangs, they were allowed to go on deck, and pace up and down under the watchful eyes of soldiery; then back to the crowded quarters below, to swelter in summer or freeze in winter. Such was their punishment for the crime of being loyal to their country.

Careful estimates show that at this time there were at least twenty thousand American sailors in the British navy, each one of whom was liable at any moment to be ordered into this inhuman captivity. A British official document of 1812 reported that 2,548 American seamen had been imprisoned for refusing to serve against their country. Hundreds of these were sent to the living death in the hulks. Was it any

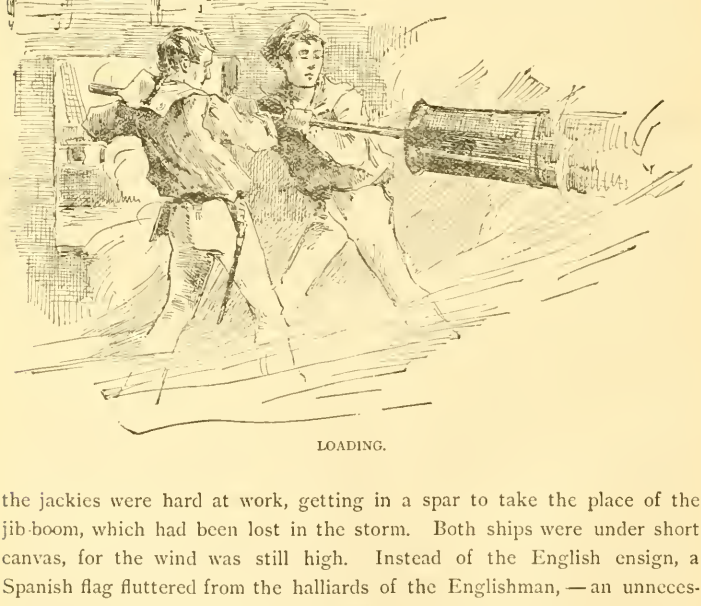
wonder that, with such facts before their eyes, Americans grew indignant at hearing that the victory of the "Constitution" had been won by the prowess of British seamen? But before many days had passed, a victory was recorded for the stars and stripes, which not even the acuteness of an English naval historian could ascribe to any cause other than the naval superiority of the victor.

This was the capture, by the United States sloop-of-war "Wasp," of the British sloop-of-war "Frolic," after a battle ever memorable for the extraordinary dash and bravery shown by each combatant. In size, the "Wasp" was one of the inferior vessels of the United States navy. In her architecture and appointments, however, she was the pride of the navy, and was often cited as a model ship of her class. Her armament consisted of sixteen thirty-two-pounder carronades, and two "long twelves."

When the war broke out, the "Wasp" had just left the coast of Europe, bearing despatches from the foreign diplomatic representatives of the United States to the Government. It was accordingly near the middle of October before the sloop had been refitted, and, with a crew of one hundred and thirty-five men, left the Delaware, on her first cruise against the English. Her commander was Capt. Jacob Jones, who had served in the war with Tripoli, and had himself been a captive among the barbarians of Northern Africa.

After a few days' cruising, with one or two unimportant captures, a bunch of sails was sighted at some distance. The most careful examination failed to reveal the character of the strangers, and Jones determined to run down cautiously toward the squadron, to reconnoitre. The wind was blowing fiercely at the time, and a heavy sea was running, from the effects of a gale of the day before, in which the "Wasp" lost her jib-boom, together with two sailors who were upon it. As the vessel bore down upon the strangers, Jones could see through his marine glasses that they were a convoy of merchantmen, under the protection of a British sloop-of-war. The merchantmen were evidently armed, and some seemed to carry as many as twelve guns. Deeming it unwise to attack at that moment, Capt. Jones kept on a course parallel with that of the enemy, during the remainder of that day and through the night. With the break of day, every officer of the "Wasp" was on deck, and all

eyes were turned towards the quarter in which the Englishmen should be found. There, sure enough, they were. Six merchant ships and a bluff little brig, the port-holes in the sides of which showed her to be a war-vessel rating as a sloop. Signs of activity on board made it evident that the Englishmen had caught sight of the vessel which had been dogging them for the last day, and were making ready to give her battle. The British, too, had suffered in the gale, and the sailors could be seen shipping a new main-yard, and setting new topsails. On the "Wasp,"



LOADING.

the jackies were hard at work, getting in a spar to take the place of the jib-boom, which had been lost in the storm. Both ships were under short canvas, for the wind was still high. Instead of the English ensign, a Spanish flag fluttered from the halliards of the Englishman, — an unnecessary ruse to draw on an adversary already seeking a conflict.

It was half-past eleven in the morning when the action began. The day was an ideal October morning at sea, — cool, clear, and a breeze blowing fresh and constantly stiffening. The two vessels were running on the star-

board tack, not sixty yards apart. As they ploughed through the waves, great clouds of spray dashed over the bows ; and every now and then a wave would sweep over the forecastle, drenching the jackies as they stood at their quarters. As they sped along, the two ships exchanged broadsides, the "Frolic" firing three to the "Wasp's" two. After every broadside, the gunners cheered as they saw the damage done by their fire. When the state of the sea is considered, it seems marvellous that the broadsides should have done any execution whatever. The vessels were rolling terribly, now wallowing in the trough of the sea, and again tossed high on the crest of some enormous wave. At one instant the muzzles of the guns would be pointed toward the skies, then actually submerged under the waves, from which they rose dripping, to be loaded and fired before another dip should soak the charge. Yet, with all this rolling to spoil their aim, the gunners of both ships pointed their pieces with most destructive effect. Within five minutes from the time of opening fire, the main top-mast of the "Wasp" was shot away, and hung tangled in the rigging, despite the active efforts of the topmen, headed by the nimble midshipmen, to clear away the wreck. This greatly hampered the movements of the American vessel ; and when, a few minutes later, the gaff and the main top-gallant mast fell, the chances of the American ship seemed poor indeed. The effects of the "Wasp's" fire were chiefly to be seen in the hull of her antagonist ; but the first twenty minutes of the fight seemed to give the Englishman every chance of victory, since his fire had so cut away the rigging of the "Wasp" that she became unmanageable. It is said that the difference between the execution done by the two batteries was due to the fact that the British fired as their ship was rising on the crest of the wave, while the Americans fired from the trough of the sea, sending their shot into the hull of the enemy.

While the fight was raging, the two ships were constantly drawing nearer together ; and just as it seemed as though the destruction wrought in the "Wasp's" rigging would inevitably lead to her defeat, the two vessels fouled. For an instant they lay yard-arm to yard-arm, and at that very moment the American gunners poured in a terrific broadside. So close were the two vessels to each other, that, in loading, the rammers were shoved up against the sides of the "Frolic." Before the gunners of the "Frolic" could respond to this broadside, their ship swung round so that her bow lay against the "Wasp's" quarter ; and her bowsprit

passed over the heads of Capt. Jones and his officers as they stood on the quarter-deck. That was the moment for a raking volley; and with deadly aim the Americans poured it in, and the heavy iron bolts swept the decks of the "Frolic" from stem to stern.

This turn in the tide of battle fairly crazed with excitement the sailors of the "Wasp." With ringing cheers they applauded the success of the last volley, and, springing into the hammock-nettings, called loudly for their officers to lead them on board the English ship. From the quarter-deck, Capt. Jones, with shouts and gestures, strove to hold back the excited men until another broadside could be given the enemy. But the enthusiasm of the sailors was beyond all control. All at once, they saw a sailor from New Jersey, named Jack Lang, spring on a gun, cutlass in hand, ready to board. All were about to follow him, when Capt. Jones called him down. Only for a minute did Jack's sense of duty overcome his enthusiasm; and then, remembering that he had once been impressed on the "Frolic," his rage blazed up, and in an instant he was clambering over the nettings, calling for followers. Capt. Jones saw that the ardor of his crew was beyond his control, and ordered the bugler to call away the boarders. Headed by their officers, the bold tars swarmed over the nettings, and through the tangled rigging, to the deck of the enemy's ship. Each man clutched his cutlass viciously, for he felt that a desperate conflict was imminent. But when they dropped upon the deck of the "Frolic," a most unexpected spectacle met their eyes.

The broad deck stretched out before them, untenanted save by a few wounded officers near the stern, and a grim old British seaman at the wheel. Instead of the host of armed men with whom the boarders expected to dispute the possession of the ship, they saw before them only heaps of dead sailors lying about the guns which they had been serving. On the quarter-deck lay Capt. Whinyates and Lieut. Wintle, desperately wounded. All who were unhurt had fled below, to escape the pitiless fire of the American guns, and the unerring aim of the sailors stationed in the "Wasp's" tops. Only the old helmsman stood undaunted at his post, and held the ship on her course, even while the Americans were swarming over the nettings and clambering down the bowsprit. The colors were still flying above the ship; but there was no one left, either to defend them or to haul them down, and they were finally lowered by the hands of Lieut. Biddle, who led the boarding party.

No action of the war was so sanguinary as this short conflict between two sloops-of-war. The "Frolic" went into action with a crew of one hundred and ten men, fully officered. When the colors were hauled down, only twenty men were uninjured. Every officer was wounded, and of the crew thirty lost their lives. They had stood to their guns with the

READY TO BOARD.

dogged courage of the English sailor at his best, and had been fairly mowed down by the destructive fire of the Americans. On the "Wasp," the loss of life was slight. The shot of the enemy took effect in the rigging chiefly. The three sailors who were killed were topmen at their posts, and the five wounded were almost all stationed in the rigging.

The Americans were not destined to enjoy their triumph long. Shat-

tered though the "Frolic" was, Lieut. Biddle, with a prize-crew, took charge of her, and was in hopes of taking her safely to port; but his plan was rudely shattered by the appearance of an English frigate, only a few hours after the action ceased. For the "Frolic" to escape, was out of the question. Both her masts had gone by the board shortly after her flag was struck; and, when the new enemy hove in sight, the prize-crew was working hard to clear from her decks the tangled mass of rigging, wreckage, and dead bodies, that made the tasks of navigation impossible. The ship was rolling like a log, in the trough of the sea, and was an easy prize for an enemy of even less strength than the man-of-war which was then bearing down upon her.

The vessel which came rapidly down before the wind was the "Poictiers," a British seventy-four-gun ship, which would have been more than a match for the little "Wasp," even though the latter had been fresh and ready for battle, instead of shattered by desperate fight. Seeing no chance for a successful resistance, Capt. Jones determined upon flight, and ordered all hands aloft, to make sail. But the sails when shaken out were found to have been cut to pieces by the "Frolic's" shot; and the "Poictiers" soon came alongside, and changed the triumph of the Americans to defeat.

Though Capt. Jones and his gallant crew were thus deprived of their hard-won conquest, they received their full meed of praise from their countrymen. They were soon exchanged, voted twenty-five thousand dollars prize-money by Congress, and lauded by every newspaper and legislative orator in the country. The song-writers of the day undertook to celebrate in verse the famous victory, and produced dozens of songs, of which the following stanza may be taken for a fair sample:—

"Like the fierce bird of Jove the 'Wasp' darted forth,
And he the tale told, with amazement and wonder.
She hurled on the foe from her flame-spreading arms,
The fire-brands of death and the red bolts of thunder.
And, oh! it was glorious and strange to behold
What torrents of fire from her red mouth she threw;
And how from her broad wings and sulphurous sides,
Hot showers of grape-shot and rifle-balls flew!"

Let us now turn to Commodore John Rodgers, whose unlucky cruise at the opening of the war we have already noted. Having refitted his squadron in the port of New York, he set sail on a second cruise, leaving behind him the "Hornet." Again he seemed to have fallen upon unprofitable times, for his ships beat up and down in the highway of commerce without sighting a single sail. After several days of inaction, it was determined to scatter the squadron; and to this end the frigate "United States," Commodore Decatur, and the sixteen-gun brig "Argus," Capt. Sinclair, left the main body of ships and started off on a cruise in company. After the two ships left the main body, Commodore Rodgers met with better success, capturing a Jamaica packet with two hundred thousand dollars in her hold, and chasing a British frigate for two hours, but without overhauling her.

In the mean time, the "Argus" had parted from her consort, and was cruising to the eastward on her own account, meeting with fair success. During her cruise she captured six merchantmen, and was herself chased by a British squadron. This chase was almost as memorable as that of the "Constitution;" for the little brig was hotly pursued for three days and nights, and, to escape her pursuers, was obliged to cut away her boats and anchors, and part with every thing movable save her guns. She escaped at last, however, and was for many months thereafter a source of continual annoyance to the commerce of the enemy.

After parting with the "Argus," the "United States" had made her course toward the south-east, in the hopes of intercepting some of the British West-Indiamen. But what the plucky sailors would consider better luck fell to the lot of the frigate.

At dawn on a bright Sunday morning, the lookout of the "United States" descried a sail about twelve miles away, on the weather-beam. Sail was crowded on the American frigate, and, urged along by a rattling breeze, she made towards the stranger. As the distance between the ships lessened, and the rigging of the stranger showed her to be a frigate, the enthusiasm among the gallant tars of the "United States" grew apace. Visions of battle, of glory, and, above all, of resultant prize-money, arose in their minds; and their shouts could be heard by the crew of the distant frigate before the two vessels came within range of each other.

The vessel toward which the "United States" was advancing was the

"Macedonian," a British frigate rating thirty-eight guns, but said to have been carrying forty-nine at this time. She had for some time been reckoned a crack ship of her class in the British navy, and her crew was in admirable training. From her quarter-deck and forecastle groups of officers and seamen were watching the on-coming of the American frigate. One of the powder-monkeys, named Samuel Leech, of the British ship, told graphically and simply the story of that day's doings on the "Macedonian."

"Sunday (Dec. 25, 1812) came, and it brought with it a stiff breeze," so runs the powder-monkey's tale. "We usually made a sort of holiday of this sacred day. After breakfast it was common to muster the entire crew on the spar-deck, dressed as the fancy of the captain might dictate, — sometimes in blue jackets and white trousers, or blue jackets and blue trousers; at other times in blue jackets, scarlet vests, and blue or white trousers; with our bright anchor-buttons glancing in the sun, and our black, glossy hats ornamented with black ribbons, and the name of our ship painted on them. After muster we frequently had church-service read by the captain; the rest of the day was devoted to idleness But we were destined to spend the rest of the sabbath just introduced to the reader in a very different manner.

"We had scarcely finished breakfast before the man at the masthead shouted 'Sail, ho!'

"The captain rushed upon deck, exclaiming, 'Masthead, there!'

"'Sir?'

"'Where away is the sail?'

"The precise answer to this question I do not recollect; but the captain proceeded to ask, 'What does she look like?'

"'A square-rigged vessel, sir,' was the reply of the lookout.

"After a few minutes, the captain shouted again, 'Masthead, there!'

"'Sir?'

"'What does she look like?'

"'A large ship, sir, standing toward us.'

"By this time, most of the crew were on deck, eagerly straining their eyes to obtain a glimpse of the approaching ship, and murmuring their opinions to each other on her probable character.

"Then came the voice of the captain, shouting, 'Keep silence, fore and aft!'

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ENGAGEMENT OF THE FRIGATES "UNITED STATES" AND "MACEDONIAN,"
CHRISTMAS DAY, 1812

"Silence being secured, he hailed the lookout, who to his question of 'What does she look like?' replied, "A large frigate bearing down upon us, sir.'

"A whisper ran along the crew, that the stranger ship was a Yankee frigate. The thought was confirmed by the command of 'All hands clear the ship for action, ahoy!' The drum and fife beat to quarters, bulkheads were knocked away, the guns were released from their confinement, the whole dread paraphernalia of battle was produced; and, after the lapse of a few minutes of hurry and confusion, every man and boy was at his post ready to do his best service for his country, except the band, who, claiming exemption from the affray, safely stowed themselves away in the cable tier. We had only one sick man on the list; and he, at the cry of battle, hurried from his cot, feeble as he was, to take his post of danger. A few of the junior midshipmen were stationed below on the berth-deck, with orders, given in our hearing, to shoot any man who attempted to move from his quarters.

"As the approaching ship showed American colors, all doubt of her character was at an end. 'We must fight her,' was the conviction of every breast. Every possible arrangement that could insure success was accordingly made. The guns were shotted, the matches lighted; for, although our guns were all furnished with first-class locks, they were also furnished with matches, attached by lanyards, in case the lock should miss fire. A lieutenant then passed through the ship, directing the marines and boarders — who were furnished with pikes, cutlasses, and pistols — how to proceed if it should be necessary to board the enemy. He was followed by the captain, who exhorted the men to fidelity and courage, urging upon their consideration the well-known motto of the brave Nelson, '*England expects every man to do his duty.*' In addition to all these preparations on deck, some men were stationed in the tops with small-arms, whose duty it was to attend to trimming the sails, and to use their muskets, provided we came to close action. There were others, also, below, called sail-trimmers, to assist in working the ship, should it be necessary to shift her position during the battle."

Thus, with her men at their quarters, her guns primed, and matches lighted, the "Macedonian" bore down to open the action. On the "United States," very similar scenes were being enacted. In some

respects, the American frigate was a more formidable ship than the adversary she was about to engage. Her battery consisted of fifty-four guns, and some were of heavier calibre than those of the "Macedonian." Her crew, too, was rather larger than that of her adversary. But, in most respects, the ships were well matched. Indeed, the commanders of the two ships had met before the opening of the war, and, in conversation, agreed that their vessels were well fitted to test the comparative valor of Yankee and English sailors. Capt. Carden of the "Macedonian" had asked Decatur what would be the probable result, if the two ships were to meet in battle.

"Why, sir," responded the American captain, "if we meet with forces that might be fairly called equal, the conflict would be severe; but the flag of my country on the ship I command shall never leave the staff on which it waves, as long as there is a hull to support it."

Such sentiments as this were ever in the heart of the gallant Decatur, whose service in the war of 1812 was but the continuation of his dashing career during the war with Tripoli. A captain of such ardent bravery could not fail to inspire his crew with the same enthusiasm and confidence.

In the crew of the "United States" were many young boys, of ages ranging from twelve to fourteen years. At that time many a lad received his warrant as midshipman while still in his tenth year; and youngsters who wished to join the navy as "ship's boys," were always received, although sometimes their extreme youth made it illegal for their names to be formally enrolled upon the roster of the crew. Such was the station of little Jack Creamer, a ten-year-old boy, who had been serving on the ship for some weeks, although under the age at which he could be legally enlisted. When Jack saw the English frigate looming up in the distance, a troubled look came over his face, and he seemed to be revolving some grave problem in his mind. His comrades noticed his look of care, and rallied him on what they supposed to be his fear of the coming conflict. Jack stoutly denied this charge, but said he was anxious to speak to the captain before going into action. An old quartermaster marched him up to the quarter-deck, and stood waiting for Capt. Decatur's attention. In a moment the captain noticed the two, and said cheerily, —

"Well, Jack, what's wanting now?"

Touching his hat, the lad replied, "Commodore, will you please to have my name put down on the muster-roll?"

"Why, what for, my lad?"

"So that I can draw my share of the prize-money, when we take that Britisher, sir."

Amused and pleased with the lad's confidence in the success of the "United States" in the coming battle, Decatur gave the necessary order; and Jack went back to his post with a prouder step, for he was now regularly enrolled.

The two ships were now coming within range of each other, and a slow, long-distance cannonade was begun, with but little effect; for a long ground-swell was on, and the ships were rolling in a manner fatal to the aim of the gunners. After half an hour of this playing at long bowls, the Englishman's mizzen top-mast was shot away; and the cannon-balls from the "States" whizzed through the rigging, and splashed into the water about the "Macedonian," in a way that proved the American gunners had the range, and were utilizing it. Capt. Carden soon saw that at long range the American gunners were more than a match for his men, and he resolved to throw prudence to the winds; and, disdaining all manœuvring, bore straight down on the American ship that lay almost stationary on the water, pouring in rapid and well-aimed broadsides.

Though a gallant and dashing movement, this course led to the defeat of the English ship. The fire of the Americans was deadly in its aim, and marvellous in rapidity. So continuous was the flashing of the discharges from the broadside ports, that the sailors on the "Macedonian" thought their adversary was on fire, and cheered lustily. But the next instant their exultation was turned to sorrow; for a well-directed shot cut away the mizzen-mast, which fell alongside, suspended by the cordage.

"Huzza, Jack!" cried the captain of a gun on the "United States." "We've made a brig of her."

"Ay, ay, my lad," said Decatur, who stood near by; "now aim well at the main-mast, and she'll be a sloop soon."

A few minutes later, the captain shouted to the nearest gunner, "Aim at the yellow streak. Her spars and rigging are going fast enough. She must have a little more hulling."

This order was immediately passed along the gun-deck, until every

gunner was striving his utmost to plant his shot in the hull of the enemy. The effect was terrible. The great missiles crashed through the wooden sides of the English frigate, and swept the decks clear of men. She was coming down on the American bravely, and with manifest intention of boarding; but so skilfully was the "United States" manœuvred, and so accurate and rapid was her fire, that the "Macedonian" was unable to close, and was fairly cut to pieces, while still more than a pistol-shot distant. The "United States," in the mean time, was almost unscathed. The aim of the English gunners was usually too high, and such shots as took effect were mainly in the rigging. After pounding away at the "Macedonian" until the chocks of the forecastle guns on that ship were cut away, her boats cut to pieces, and her hull shattered with more than one hundred shot-holes, the American ship drew away slightly. The British thought she was in retreat, and cheered lustily, but were soon undeceived; for, after a little manœuvring, the "United States" ranged up under her adversary's lee, securing a raking position. Before a broadside could be fired, the British hauled down their flag; and the action was ended, after just an hour and a half of fighting.

The slaughter on the British frigate had been appalling. From the official accounts, we glean the cold reports of the numbers of the killed and wounded; but for any picture of the scene on the decks of the defeated man-of-war, we must turn to such descriptions as have been left by eye-witnesses. Sailors are not much given to the habit of jotting down the descriptions of the many stirring scenes in which they play parts in their adventurous careers; and much that is romantic, much that is picturesque, and much that is of historic value, has thus been lost to history. But of the details of the action between the "Macedonian" and "United States," the sailor-lad already quoted has left an account, probably as trustworthy as should be expected of a witness in his situation. He was stationed at one of the guns on the main-deck; and it was his duty, as powder-boy, to run to the magazine for powder for his gun. Before the entrance to the magazine was a heavy wooden screen, pierced with a hole through which the cartridges were passed out to the fleet-footed powder-monkeys, as they rushed up for more powder. Each boy, on getting his cartridge, wrapped it in his jacket, that no stray spark might touch it, and dashed off at full speed for his gun, quickly returning for further supplies.

With the men all standing pale and silent at the guns, the "Macedonian" came on doggedly towards her foe. Three guns fired from the larboard side of the gun-deck opened the action; but the fire was quickly stopped by the gruff order from the quarter-deck, "Cease firing: you are throwing away your shot!" Then came the roar of the opening volley from the American frigate.

"A strange noise such as I had never heard before next arrested my attention," wrote the English sailor-lad. "It sounded like the tearing of sails just over our heads. This I soon ascertained to be the wind of the enemy's shot. The firing, after a few minutes' cessation, recommenced. The roaring of cannon could now be heard from all parts of our trembling ship; and, mingling as it did with that of our foes, it made a most hideous noise. By and by I heard the shot strike the sides of our ship. The whole scene grew indescribably confused and horrible. It was like some awfully tremendous thunder-storm, whose deafening roar is attended by incessant streaks of lightning, carrying death in every flash, and strewing the ground with the victims of its wrath; only in our case the scene was rendered more horrible than that by the presence of torrents of blood, which dyed our decks. Though the recital may be painful, yet, as it will reveal the horrors of war, and show at what a fearful price the victory is won or lost, I will present the reader with things as they met my eye during the progress of this dreadful fight. I was busily supplying my gun with powder, when I saw blood suddenly fly from the arm of a man stationed at our gun. I saw nothing strike him: the effect alone was visible; and in an instant the third lieutenant tied his handkerchief round the wounded arm, and sent the poor fellow below to the surgeon.

"The cries of the wounded now rang through all parts of the ship. These were carried to the cock-pit as fast as they fell, while those more fortunate men who were killed outright were immediately thrown overboard. As I was stationed but a short distance from the main hatchway, I could catch a glance at all who were carried below. A glance was all I could indulge in; for the boys belonging to the guns next to mine were wounded in the early part of the action, and I had to spring with all my might to keep three or four guns supplied with cartridges. I saw two of these lads fall nearly together. One of them was struck in the leg by a large shot; he had to suffer amputation above the wound. The other had a grape or canister

sent through his ankle. A stout Yorkshire man lifted him in his arms, and hurried with him to the cock-pit. He had his foot cut off, and was thus made lame for life. Two of the boys stationed on the quarter-deck were killed. They were both Portuguese. A man who saw one killed afterwards told me that his powder caught fire, and burnt the flesh almost off his face. In this pitiable situation the agonized boy lifted up both hands, as if imploring relief, when a passing shot instantly cut him in two."

But the narrative of this young sailor, a boy in years, is almost too horrible for reproduction. He tells of men struck by three or four missiles at once, and hacked to pieces; of mangled sailors, mortally wounded, but still living, thrown overboard to end their sufferings; of the monotonous drip of the blood on the deck, as desperately wounded men were carried past. The brave seaman who left his bed of sickness for the post of duty had his head carried away by a cannon-ball. The schoolmaster who looked after the education of the midshipmen was killed. Even a poor goat, kept by the officers for her milk, was cut down by a cannon-ball, and, after hobbling piteously about the deck, was mercifully thrown overboard. And this was Sunday, Christmas Day!

The spot amidships where our sailor-lad was stationed must have been the hottest station in the whole ship. Many years later, as Herman Melville, the author of several exciting sea-tales, was walking the deck of a man-of-war with an old negro, "Tawney," who had served on the "Macedonian," the veteran stopped at a point abreast the main-mast. "This part of the ship," said he, "we called the slaughter-house, on board the 'Macedonian.' Here the men fell, five and six at a time. An enemy always directs its shot here, in order to hurl over the mast, if possible. The beams and carlines overhead in the 'Macedonian' slaughter-house were spattered with blood and brains. About the hatchways it looked like a butcher's stall. A shot entering at one of the port-holes dashed dead two-thirds of a gun's crew. The captain of the next gun, dropping his lock-string, which he had just pulled, turned over the heap of bodies, to see who they were; when, perceiving an old messmate who had sailed with him in many cruises, he burst into tears, and taking the corpse up in his arms, and going to the side with it, held it over the water a moment, and eying it, cried, 'O God! Tom'— 'Hang your prayers over that thing! Overboard with it, and down to your gun!' The order was obeyed, and the heart-stricken sailor returned to his post."

Amid such scenes of terror, the British tars fought on doggedly, cheering loudly as they worked their guns, but not knowing why they cheered; for the officers, at least, could see how surely the battle was going against them. When the "United States" drew away to repair damages, the British officers held a consultation on the quarter-deck. They could not but see that their position was hopeless; and, knowing all further resistance to be folly, the flag was hauled down. To the pride of the officers, the surrender was doubtless a severe blow. But Sam Leech remarks pithily, that to him "it was a pleasing sight; for he had seen fighting enough for one Sabbath, — more, indeed, than he wished to see again on a week-day."

Decatur at once hailed, to learn the name of his prize, and then sent off a boat with Lieut. Allen to take possession. He found the decks of the ship in a fearful state. Many of the crew had found liquor, and were drinking heavily. Others were throwing the dead into the sea, carrying the wounded below, and sprinkling the deck with hot vinegar, to remove the stains and odor of blood. The dead numbered forty-three, and sixty-one were wounded. An eye-witness of the terrible spectacle writes of it: "Fragments of the dead were distributed in every direction, the decks covered with blood, — one continued, agonizing yell of the unhappy wounded. A scene so horrible of my fellow-creatures, I assure you, deprived me very much of the pleasure of victory." Yet, with all this terrific destruction and loss of life on the "Macedonian," the "United States" was but little injured; and her loss amounted to but seven killed, and five wounded. Indeed, so slight was the damage done to the American ship, that an hour's active work by her sailors put her in trim for a second battle.

While Lieut. Allen was examining the muster-rolls of the "Macedonian," a sailor pushed his way toward the quarter-deck, and cried out that he was an impressed American, and that he had seven mates aboard, all pressed into the British service. They had all been forced to serve against their country, and in the battle three had been killed. Just before the battle began, they had begged to be sent below, but were peremptorily ordered to stand by their guns, or expect to be treated as mutineers. Now that the battle was over, the five who were left alive begged to be taken into the crew of the "United States," which was accordingly done.

After the "Macedonian" had been formally taken possession of by

Lieut. Allen, the British officers were removed to the American ship. Some of them were inclined to be very surly over their defeat, and by words and actions showed their contempt for the Americans, whose prisoners they were. In the first boat which went from the prize to the victor was the first lieutenant of the "Macedonian." As he clambered down the side of his vessel, he noticed that his baggage had not been put in the boat which was to bear him to the American frigate. Turning to Lieut. Allen, he said surlily, —

"You do not intend to send me away without my baggage?"

"I hope," responded Allen courteously, "that you do not take us for privateersmen."

"I am sure I don't know by whom I have been taken," was the rude reply, which so angered Allen that he peremptorily ordered the fellow to take his place in the boat, and be silent.

Whatever may have been the demeanor of the British captives, they met with nothing but the most considerate treatment from the American officers. Capt. Carden, on his arrival upon the deck of the victorious frigate, was received with the consideration due his rank and the brave defence of his vessel. He was conducted at once to Decatur's cabin, on entering which he took off his sword, and mutely held it out for Decatur's acceptance. Decatur courteously refused to accept it, saying, "Sir, I cannot take the sword of a man who has defended his ship so bravely; but I will take your hand." As long as Carden and his officers remained on the ship, they were treated with the greatest consideration, and were allowed to retain all their personal property. Every attempt was made to take away from them the bitter remembrance of their defeat. The innate nobility of Decatur's nature is well shown in a letter written to his wife a few days after the action. "One-half of the satisfaction," he says, "arising from this victory is destroyed in seeing the mortification of poor Carden, who deserved success as much as we did who had the good fortune to obtain it." When Carden left the ship, he thanked Decatur for his consideration, and expressed a desire to do likewise by the Americans, should he ever be able to turn the tables.

Amid the heat of battle and the excitement of success, Decatur did not forget little Jack Creamer, the lately enrolled ship's boy. Shortly after the close of the conflict, he sent for Jack to come to his cabin. Soon a much abashed small boy stood before the captain.

"Well, Jack," said the great man, "we did take her, after all."

"Yes, your Honor," responded Jack. "I knew we would, before we gave her the first broadside."

"And your share of the prize-money," continued Decatur, "may amount to two hundred dollars, if we get her safe into port. Now, what are you going to do with so much money?"

Jack's eyes had lighted up at the thought of such great wealth.

"Please, sir," he cried, "I'll send half of it to my mother; and the rest will get me a bit of schooling."

"Well said, Jack," said Decatur warmly; and the interview closed for the time. But the captain's interest in the boy was aroused, and for years he showed an almost fatherly regard for the lad. Jack had his "bit of schooling," then received a midshipman's warrant, and for years served with Decatur, giving promise of becoming an able officer. At last, however, his career was ended by the accidental upsetting of a boat when on a pleasure excursion in the Mediterranean.

After putting in for a short time at New London, the two ships, captor and captive, proceeded down the Sound to New York. Here they arrived on the 1st of January, 1813; and the news-writers of the day straightway hailed the "Macedonian" as "a New Year's gift, with the compliments of old Neptune." However, the news of the victory had spread throughout the land before the ships came up to New York; for Decatur had sent out a courier from New London to bear the tidings to Washington. A curious coincidence made the delivery of the despatch as impressive as a studied dramatic scene.

It so happened that the people of Washington had chosen the night of Dec. 28 for a grand ball, to be tendered to the officers of the navy, and particularly to Capt. Stewart of the "Constellation." A brilliant company was gathered, in honor of the occasion. The Secretary of the Navy, and other cabinet officers, lent their presence to the festivities. Capt. Hull of the victorious "Constitution" was present; and, to make the affair even more of a triumph, the captured colors of the "Alert" and the "Guerriere" were draped on the wall of the hall. Near midnight, the revelry was at its height. The brilliant toilets of the ladies; the men, gorgeous in the uniforms of the army, navy, or diplomatic corps; the light of a thousand wax-candles flashing from a myriad of sconces, —

made the scene one of the utmost splendor. All at once, in the midst of the stately measures of the old-fashioned minuet, a murmur rose near the entrance to the hall, and spread until every one was whispering, that news had come of a great naval battle, a victory. Word was brought to the Secretary of the Navy. He directed that the bearer of the despatches should be at once admitted; and, amid cheers and clapping of hands, Lieut. Hamilton entered the hall, and delivered his despatches to his father, the Secretary of the Navy. The tenor of the despatch was soon known to all; and Lieut. Hamilton turned from the greetings of his mother and sisters, who were present, to receive the congratulations of his brother-officers. He had brought the colors of the captured ship with him to the city; and Capts. Stewart and Hull immediately went in search of them, and soon returned, bearing the flag between them. The two veteran sailors marched the length of the hall, amid the plaudits of the gay company, and laid the colors before Mrs. Madison, — the Dolly Madison who is still remembered as the most popular of the "ladies of the White House." Then the company proceeded to the banquet-hall, where, to the list of toasts already prepared, was added, "The health of Commodore Decatur and the officers and crew of the 'United States.'"

Two weeks later, Capt. Decatur and his officers and the crew of the "United States" were sumptuously entertained by the citizens of New York. The officers were tendered a banquet in the great assembly-room of the City Hotel, which was decked with laurel and ship's spars and sails. The chief table at the head of the room, at which sat Mayor De Witt Clinton and Capts. Hull and Decatur, was a marvel of decoration. Its centre was taken up by a sheet of water with grassy banks, bearing on its placid surface a miniature frigate floating at her moorings. Each of the smaller tables bore a small frigate on a pedestal in the centre of the board. On the wall at the end of the room hung a heavy sail, on which was printed the motto, —

"OUR CHILDREN ARE THE PROPERTY OF THEIR COUNTRY."

After the dinner was ended and the toasts were begun, the health of the navy was proposed. At the word, the great sail began to ascend, and, being drawn to the ceiling, disclosed an illuminated transparent

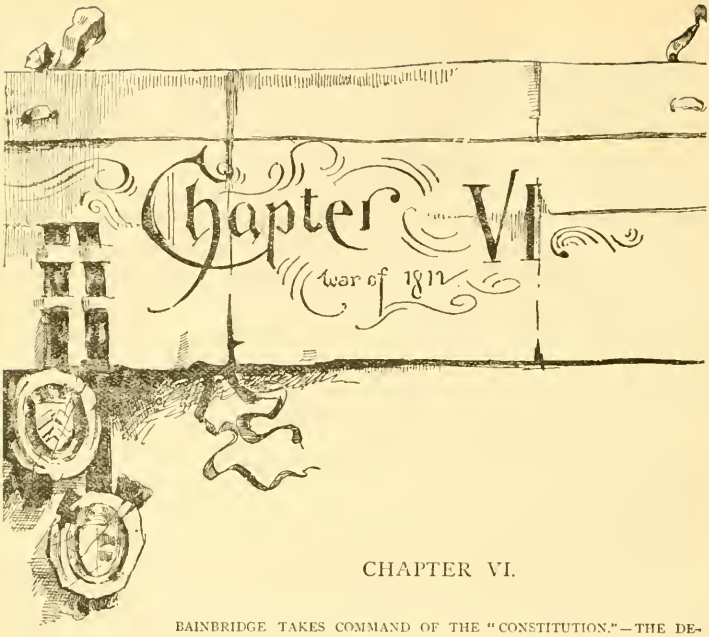
painting, showing vividly the scenes of the three great actions won by the "Constitution," the "United States," and the "Wasp." The whole company rose and cheered, until the walls of the hall fairly rung.

Three days later, the jackies from the forecastle of the "United States" were entertained. They were landed at the Battery, and marched in procession to the hotel, headed by a brass band which had been captured with the "Macedonian." Four hundred of the fine fellows were in the line, clad in the dress uniform of the navy of that time. Glazed canvas hats with stiff rims, decked with streamers of ribbon; blue jackets buttoned loosely over red waistcoats; and blue trousers with bell-buttons, — made up the toggery of the tar of 1812. As they marched, two by two, through the narrow streets that led to the City Hotel, the populace assembled on the sidewalks and in the windows along the route, greeting the jackies with cheers. The rear was brought up by the usual band of street-urchins, each of whom that day was firm in his determination to be a sailor.

After the banquet at the hotel, the sailors were marched to the theatre, where the pit had been set aside for them. The orchestra opened with "Yankee Doodle;" but the first bar had hardly been played, when the cheers of the blue-jackets fairly drowned the music, and the musicians were fain to stop. The programme had been arranged with special regard to the seafaring audience. Little children bounded upon the stage, bearing huge letters in their hands, and, after lightly whirling through the mazes of the dance, grouped themselves so that the letters formed the words, —

HULL, JONES, DECATUR.

Then came more cheers from the pit; and more than one glazed hat soared over the heads of the audience, and fell on the stage, — a purely nautical substitute for a bouquet. Late at night, the sailors returned to their ship, elated with an ovation the like of which has never since been tendered to the humble heroes of the forecastle or the ranks.




## CHAPTER VI.

BAINBRIDGE TAKES COMMAND OF THE "CONSTITUTION."—THE DEFEAT OF THE "JAVA."—CLOSE OF THE YEAR'S HOSTILITIES ON THE OCEAN.

As Hull and Decatur sat in the gayly decorated banquet-hall at New York, and, amid the plaudits of the brilliant assembly, drank bumpers to the success of the navy, they litttle thought that thousands of miles away the guns of an American frigate were thundering, and the stout-hearted blue-jackets laying down their lives for the honor and glory of the United States. But so it was. The opening year of the war was not destined to close without yet a fourth naval victory for the Americans; and, at the very moment when they were so joyfully celebrating the glories already won, Capt. Bainbridge in the good ship "Constitution" was valiantly giving battle to a British frigate far south of the equator.

Before considering the details of this last action of the year 1812, let us recount briefly the movements of some American vessels in commis-

sion at this time. After sending the "Guerriere" to the bottom of the sea, and bringing her officers and crew in triumph into Boston, Capt. Hull had voluntarily relinquished the command of the "Constitution," in order that some other officer might win laurels with the noble frigate. In his place was appointed Capt. Bainbridge, who had served in the wars with France and Tripoli. After a short time spent in refitting, Bainbridge sailed from Boston, accompanied by the "Hornet," eighteen guns. The "Essex," thirty-two, Capt. Porter, was lying in the Delaware at the time Bainbridge left Boston, and her captain was ordered to cruise in the track of British West-Indiamen. After spending some time in this service, he was to turn southward and visit several South American ports, with a view to joining Bainbridge. Should he fail to find the "Constitution," he was free to act at his own discretion. This permission gave Porter an opportunity to make a cruise seldom equalled in naval annals, and which will form the subject of a subsequent chapter.

The "Constitution" and "Hornet" left Boston on the 26th of October, and shaped their course at once for the south. They put in at two or three ports which had been named to Capt. Porter as meeting-places, but, finding no trace of the "Essex," continued their cruise. At Port Praya in the island of St. Jago, and at Fernando Noronha, the two ships assumed the character of British men-of-war. Officers from whose uniform every trace of the American eagle had been carefully removed went ashore, and, after paying formal visits to the governors of the two islands, requested permission to leave letters for Sir James Yeo of His Majesty's service. Though directed to this prominent British naval officer, the letters were intended for Capt. Porter, and contained directions for his cruise, written in sympathetic ink. After the letters were deposited, the two vessels left; and we may be sure that the British colors came down from the masthead as soon as the ships were out of sight.

The next point at which the American ships stopped was San Salvador, on the coast of Brazil. Here Bainbridge lay-to outside the harbor, and sent in Capt. Lawrence with the "Hornet" to communicate with the American consul. Lawrence returned greatly excited In the harbor he had found the British sloop-of-war "Bonne Citoyenne," of twenty guns, which was on the point of sailing for England. A more evenly matched adversary for the "Hornet" could not have been found, and

the Yankee sailors longed for an engagement. A formal challenge was sent, through the American consul, to the captain of the British ship, requesting him to come out and try conclusions with the "Hornet." Every assurance was offered that the "Constitution" would remain in the offing, and take no part in the battle, which was to test the strength of the two equally matched ships only. Some days later, this challenge was reduced to writing, and sent to the English captain. But that officer declined the challenge, giving as his reason the fact that he had in his ship over half a million pounds in specie, which it was his duty

ASSUMING TO BE BRITISH MEN-OF-WAR.

to convey to England. For him to give battle to the "Hornet," would therefore be unwise, as he would put in jeopardy this money which it was his duty to guard. This response was conclusive, and the Englishman must be admitted to have acted wisely; but the knowledge of the valuable cargo of the "Bonne Citoyenne" only increased the desire of the Americans to capture her. The "Hornet" accordingly remained outside the harbor, as a blockader, while the "Constitution" continued her cruise alone.

She had not far to go in order to meet an enemy well worthy of her metal. Three days after parting with the "Hornet," two sail were made,

well in shore. One of the vessels so sighted seemed to make for the land, as though anxious to avoid meeting the American ship; while the other came about, and made her course boldly toward the "Constitution."

It was about nine o'clock on a bright December morning that the "Constitution" encountered the strange vessel, which bore down upon her. A light breeze, of sufficient force to enable the vessels to manœuvre, was blowing; but the surface of the ocean was as placid as a lake in summer. The build of the stranger left no doubt of her warlike character, and the bold manner in which she sought a meeting with the American ship convinced Bainbridge that he had fallen in with an enemy. The "Constitution" did not for a time meet the enemy's advances in kind. Back of the advancing frigate could be seen the low, dark coast-line of Brazil, into whose neutral waters the Englishman could retreat, and thus gain protection, if the conflict seemed to go against him. Bainbridge determined that the coming battle should be fought beyond the possibility of escape for the vanquished, and therefore drew away gradually as the stranger came on. By noon the two ships were near enough together for flags to be visible, when Bainbridge set his colors, and displayed private signals. The enemy did the same; and, though his signals were unintelligible, the flag that fluttered at the masthead was clearly the flag of Great Britain. Bainbridge continued his retreat for an hour longer, then, being far enough from land, took in his main-sail and royals, and tacked toward the Englishman.

By this time the strange sail which had been sighted in company with the English ship had disappeared. The low-lying coast of Brazil had sunk below the horizon. From the deck of the "Constitution," nothing could be seen but the vast circle of placid ocean, and the English frigate about a mile to the windward, bearing down to open the fight. The drums beat, and the crew went quietly and in perfect order to their quarters. They were no longer the raw, untrained crew that had joined the ship some months before. They were veterans, with the glorious victory over the "Guerriere" fresh in their remembrance, and now animated with a desire to add to their trophies the strange vessel then in sight.

As the enemy, which proved to be the "Java," thirty-eight, Capt. Lambert, came nearer, she hauled down her colors, leaving only a jack flying. A jack is a small flag hoisted at the bowsprit cap. The Union jack of the

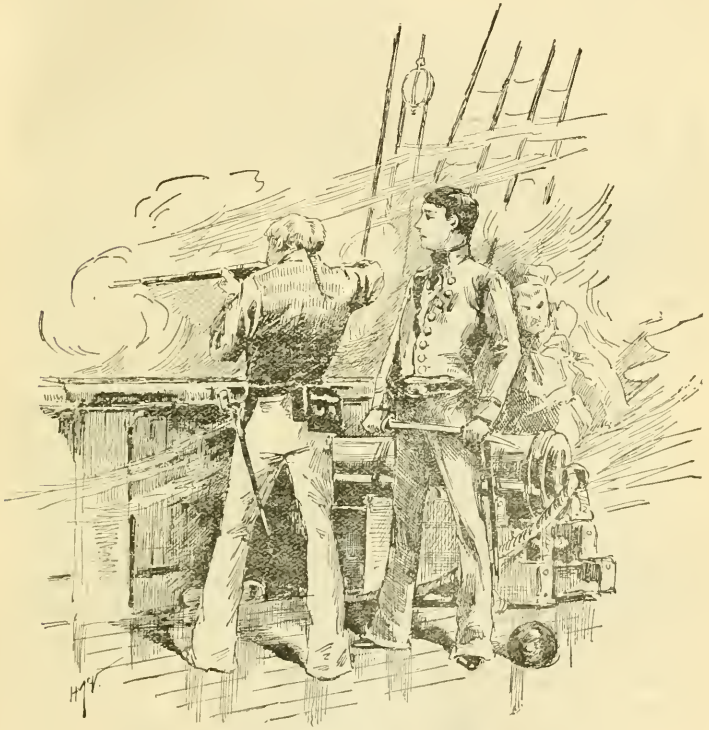
United States navy is a blue flag dotted with stars, but without the stripes of the national flag; the jack of Great Britain has the scarlet cross of St. George on a blue field. The Englishman's action in hauling down his ensigns puzzled Bainbridge, who sent a shot as an order that they be raised again. The response to this reminder came in the form of a heavy broadside, and the action opened.

In the light wind that was blowing, the enemy proved the better sailer, and soon forged ahead. His object was to cross the bows of the American ship, and get in a raking broadside, — the end and aim of most of the naval manœuvring in those days of wooden ships and heavy batteries. By skilful seamanship, Bainbridge warded off the danger; and the fight continued broadside to broadside. The firing on both sides was rapid and well directed. After half an hour of fighting, the "Constitution" was seriously crippled by a round shot, which carried away her wheel, and wounded Bainbridge by driving a small copper bolt deep into his thigh. For a moment it seemed as though the American ship was lost. Having no control over the rudder, her head fell off, her sails flapped idly against the spars, and the enemy was fast coming into an advantageous position. But, though wounded, the indomitable Yankee captain was equal to the occasion. Tackle was rigged upon the rudder-post between decks, and a crew of jackies detailed to work the improvised helm. The helmsmen were far out of earshot of the quarter-deck: so a line of midshipmen was formed from the quarter-deck to the spot where the sailors tugged at the steering-lines.

"Hard-a-port!" Bainbridge would shout from his station on the quarter-deck.

"Hard-a-port! Hard-a-port!" came the quick responses, as the midshipmen passed the word along. And so the ship was steered; and, notwithstanding the loss of her wheel, fairly out-manœuvred her antagonist. The first raking broadside was delivered by the "Constitution," and did terrible execution along the gun-deck of the English ship. The two ships then ran before the wind, exchanging broadsides at a distance of half pistol-shot. At this game the American was clearly winning: so the Englishman determined to close and board, in the dashing, fearless way that had made the tars of Great Britain the terror of all maritime peoples. The frigate bore down on the "Constitution," and struck her

on the quarter; the long jib-boom tearing its way through the rigging of the American ship. But, while this movement was being executed, the American gunners had not been idle; and the results of their labors were very evident, in the rigging of the "Java." Her jib-boom and bow-



MARINES PICKING OFF THE ENEMY.

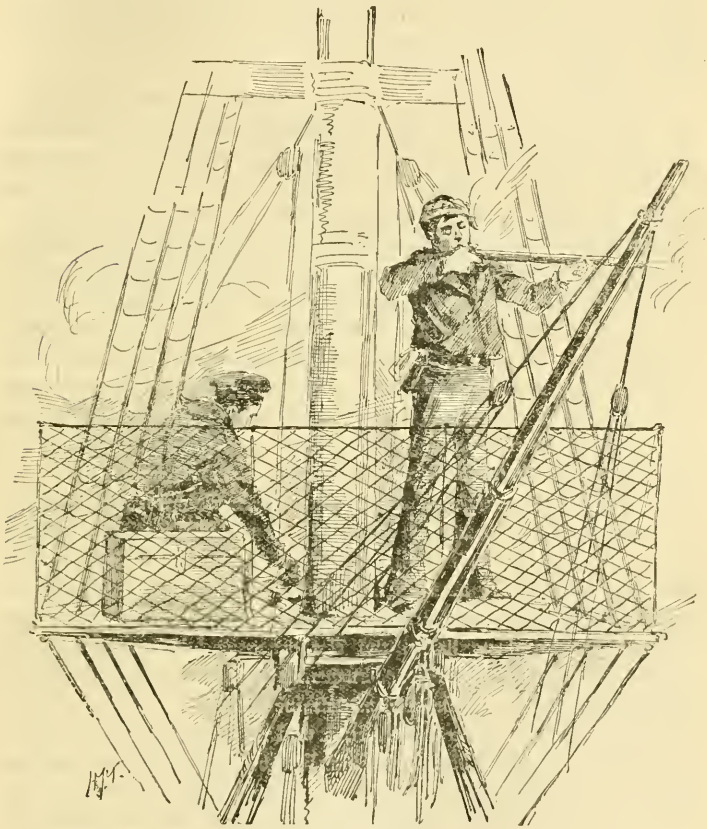
sprit were so shattered by shot, that they were on the point of giving way, and, as the ships met, the mizzen-mast fell, crashing through forecastle and main-deck, crushing officers and sailors beneath it in the fall, and hurling the topmen into the ocean to drown. The "Constitution"

shot ahead, but soon wore and lay yard-arm to yard-arm with her foe. For some minutes the battle raged with desperation. A dense sulphurous smoke hung about the hulls of the two ships, making any extended vision impossible. Once in a while a fresher puff of wind, or a change in the position of the ships, would give the jackies a glimpse of their enemy, and show fierce faces glaring from the open ports, as the great guns were drawn in for loading. Then the gray pall of smoke fell, and nothing was to be seen but the carnage near at hand. The officers on the quarter-deck could better judge of the progress of the fray; and, the marines stationed there took advantage of every clear moment to pick off some enemy with a shot from one of their muskets. High up in the tops of the "Constitution" were two small howitzers, with which crews of topmen, under the command of midshipmen, made lively play with grape and canister upon the crowded decks of the enemy. From the cavernous submarine depths of the cock-pit and magazine, to the tops of each ship, not an idler was to be found. Chaplains, surgeons, clerks, cooks, and waiters — all were working or fighting for the honor of the flag under which they served.

Again the British determined to board; and the quick, sharp notes of the bugle calling up the boarders gave warning of their intentions. The men in the tops of the American frigate, looking down from their lofty station, could see the crowd of boarders and marines gathered on the forecastle and in the gang-ways, and could hear the shrill notes of the boatswain's whistle cheering them on. At that moment, however, the American fire raked the enemy with fearful effect, and the volleys of musketry from the marines and topmen made such havoc among the crowded boarders that the attempt was abandoned. The deadly fire of the Americans was not slackened. Capt. Lambert was struck down, mortally wounded; and the command fell upon Lieut. Chads, who, though himself badly wounded, continued the fight with true British courage. Over the side of the "Java" hung the wreck of her top-hamper, which every broadside set on fire. Yet the British tars fought on, cheering lustily, and not once thinking of surrender, though they saw their fore-mast gone, their mizzen-mast shivered, even the last flag shot away, and the last gun silenced.

When affairs had reached this stage, the "Constitution," seeing no

flag flying on the enemy, hauled away, and set about repairing her own damages. While thus engaged, the main-mast of the "Java" was seen to go by the board, and the ship lay a hopeless wreck upon the water.



IN THE CROSS-TREES.

After making some slight repairs, Bainbridge returned to take possession of his prize, but, to his surprise, found a jack still floating over the helpless hulk. It was merely a bit of bravado, however; for, as the "Constitution" ranged up alongside, the jack was hauled down.

The "Java" proved to be a rich prize. She was one of the best of the English frigates, and had just been especially fitted up for the accommodation of the governor-general of Bombay and his staff, all of whom were then on board. This added to the regular number of officers and crew more than one hundred prisoners, mostly of high rank in British military and social circles.

The boarding officer found the ship so badly cut up that to save her was impossible. Her loss in men, including her captain Henry Lambert, and five midshipmen, was forty-eight, together with one hundred and five wounded, among whom were many officers. The "Constitution" had suffered much less severely, having but twelve killed and twenty wounded. The ship herself was but little damaged; her chief injury being the loss of her wheel, which was immediately replaced by that of the "Java."

Capt. Bainbridge now found himself a great distance from home, with a disabled ship filled with prisoners, many of whom were wounded. Even had the wreck of the "Java" been less complete, it would have been hazardous to attempt to take her back to the United States through the West India waters that swarmed with British vessels. No course was open save to take the prisoners aboard the "Constitution," and set the torch to the disabled hulk.

To do this was a work of no little difficulty. The storm of lead and iron that had swept across the decks of the British frigate had left intact not one of the boats that hung from the davits. The "Constitution" had fared better; but, even with her, the case was desperate, for the British cannonade had left her but two serviceable boats. To transfer from the sinking ship to the victorious frigate nearly five hundred men, over a hundred of whom were wounded, was a serious task when the means of transfer were thus limited.

Three days the "Constitution" lay by her defeated enemy, and hour after hour the boats plied between the two ships. The first to be moved were the wounded. Tackle was rigged over the side of the "Java;" and the mangled sufferers, securely lashed in their hammocks, were gently lowered into the waiting boat, and soon found themselves in the sick-bay of the American ship, where they received the gentlest treatment from those who a few hours before sought only to slay them. The transfer of the wounded once accomplished, the work proceeded with

great rapidity: and in the afternoon of the third day the "Constitution" was filled with prisoners; and the "Java," a deserted, shattered hulk, was ready for the last scene in the drama of her career.

The last boat left the desolate wreck, and, reaching the "Constitution," was hauled up to the davits. The side of the American frigate next to the abandoned ship was crowded with men, who looked eagerly across the water. Through the open port-holes of the "Java," a flickering gleam could be seen, playing fitfully upon the decks and gun-carriages. The light grew brighter, and sharp-tongued flames licked the outside of the hull, and set the tangled cordage in a blaze. With this the whole ship seemed to burst into fire, and lay tossing, a huge ball of flame, on the rising sea. When the fire was raging most fiercely, there came a terrific explosion, and the great hull was lifted bodily from the water, falling back shattered into countless bits. Guns, anchors, and iron-work dragged the greater part of the wreckage to the bottom; and when the "Constitution," with all sail set, left the spot, the captive Englishmen, looking sadly back, could see only a patch of charred wood-work and cordage floating upon the ocean to mark the burial-place of the sturdy frigate "Java."

The "Constitution" made sail for San Salvador, where the prisoners were landed; first giving their paroles not to serve against the "United States" until regularly exchanged. Bainbridge then took his ship to Boston, where she arrived in February, 1813.

The substitution of the wheel of the "Java" for that of the "Constitution," shot away in battle, has been alluded to. In his biography of Capt. Bainbridge, Fenimore Cooper relates a story of interest regarding this trophy. It was a year or two after peace was made with England, in 1815, that a British naval officer visited the "Constitution," then lying at the Boston navy-yard. The frigate had been newly fitted out for a cruise to the Mediterranean; and an American officer, with some pride, showed the Englishman over the ship, which was then undoubtedly the finest of American naval vessels. After the tour of the ship had been made, the host said, as they stood chatting on the quarter-deck, —

"Well, what do you think of her?"

"She is one of the finest frigates, if not the very finest, I ever put my foot aboard of," responded the Englishman; "but, as I must find

some fault, I'll just say that your wheel is one of the clumsiest things I ever saw, and is unworthy of the vessel."

The American officer laughed.

"Well, you see," said he, "when the 'Constitution' took the 'Java,' the former's wheel was shot out of her. The 'Java's' wheel was fitted on the victorious frigate, to steer by; and, although we think it as ugly as you do, we keep it as a trophy."

All criticisms on the wheel ended then and there.

The defeat of the "Java" closed the warfare on the ocean during 1812. The year ended with the honors largely in the possession of the United States navy. The British could boast of the capture of but two armed vessels, — the "Nautilus," whose capture by an overwhelming force we have already noted; and the little brig "Vixen," twelve guns, which Sir James Yeo, with the "Southampton," thirty-two, had overhauled and captured in the latter part of November. The capture of the "Wasp" by the "Poictiers," when the American sloop-of-war was cut up by her action with the "Frolic," was an occurrence, which, however unfortunate for the Americans, reflected no particular honor upon the British arms.

In opposition to this record, the Americans could boast of victory in four hard-fought battles. In no case had they won through any lack of valor on the part of their antagonists; for the Englishmen had not sought to avoid the battle, and had fought with the dogged valor characteristic of their nation. In one or two instances, it is true that the Americans were more powerful than the foe whom they engaged; but, in such cases, the injury inflicted was out of all proportion to the disparity in size of the combatants. The four great actions resulting in the defeat of the "Guerriere," the "Frolic," the "Macedonian," and the "Java," showed conclusively that the American blue-jackets were equal in courage to their British opponents, and far their superiors in coolness, skill, discipline, and self-reliance; and these qualities may be said to have won the laurels for the American navy that were conceded to it by all impartial observers.

Besides the victories over the four British ships enumerated, the Americans had captured the "Alert," and a British transport bearing a considerable detachment of troops. These achievements, as involving no bloodshed, may be set off against the captures of the "Nautilus" and

"Vixen" by the British. Of the number of British merchant-vessels captured, the records are so incomplete that no accurate estimate can be made. To the naval vessels are accredited forty-six captures among the enemy's merchant-marine, and this estimate is probably very nearly accurate. But with the declaration of war, Portsmouth, Salem, New London, New York, Baltimore, and, indeed, every American seaport, fitted out fleet privateers to prey upon the enemy's commerce. The sails of this private armed navy fairly whitened the sea, and few nights were not illuminated by the flames of some burning prize. As their chief object was plunder, the aim of the privateers was to get their prize safely into port; but, when this was impossible, they were not slow in applying the torch to the captured vessel. The injury they inflicted upon the enemy was enormous, and the record of their exploits might well engage the industry of painstaking historians. As an adjunct to the regular navy, they were of great service in bringing the war to a happy conclusion.

It is not to be supposed that the British men-of-war and privateers were idle while the Americans were thus sweeping the seas. More than one American vessel set sail boldly from some little New England port, freighted with the ventures of all classes of tradesmen, only to be snapped up by a rapacious cruiser. But the mercantile marine of the United States was but small, and offered no such rewards to enterprising privateers as did the goodly fleets of West-Indiamen that bore the flag of Great Britain. And so, while the American privateers were thriving and reaping rich rewards of gold and glory, those of the British were gradually abandoning privateering in disgust. The American prize-lists grew so large, that the newspapers commenced the practice of publishing weekly a list of the enemy's ships taken during the week past. In Baltimore, Henry Niles, in his paper "The Weekly Register," robbed "The London Naval Chronicle" of its vainglorious motto, —

> "The winds and seas are Britain's broad domain,
> And not a sail but by permission spreads."

This sentiment Niles printed at the head of his weekly list of British vessels captured by United States vessels, — a bit of satire not often equalled in the columns of newspapers of to-day.

## CHAPTER VII.

THE WAR ON THE LAKES. — THE ATTACK ON SACKETT'S HARBOR. — OLIVER HAZARD PERRY ORDERED TO LAKE ERIE. — THE BATTLE OF PUT-IN-BAY.

LET us now abandon for a time our consideration of the progress of the great naval war on the ocean, and turn our attention to a humbler theatre, in which the drama of battle was proceeding with no less credit to the American participants, though with less grand and inspiring accessories. On the great fresh-water lakes which skirt the northern frontier of the United States, the two warring powers contended fiercely for the mastery. But there were no desperate duels between well-matched frigates; nor, indeed, did either the British or American squadron of the lake station boast a craft of sufficient armament to be termed a frigate, until the war was nearly at an end. Barges, gunboats, sloops, schooners, and brigs made up the squadrons that fought for the possession of the fresh-water seas; and few either of the jackies of the forecastle or the officers of the quarter-deck were bred to the regular service. With such forces it could only happen that the

encounters of the foes should be little more than skirmishes, and that neither in immediate loss of life nor in direct results should these skirmishes be important. Such, in fact, was the general character of the hostilities on the lakes, with two noteworthy exceptions, — Perry's victory at Put-in-Bay, and McDonough's successful resistance of the British on Lake Champlain.

That the war should invade the usually peaceful waters of Ontario, Erie, and Champlain, was inevitable from the physical characteristics of the northern frontier of the United States. Great Britain held Canada; and an invasion of her enemy's territory from that province was a military measure, the advisability of which was evident to the most untaught soldier. No overland expedition could hope to make its way through the dense forests of Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont, or the Adirondack region of New York. But the lakes offered a tempting opening for invasion. Particularly did the placid, navigable waters of Lake Champlain, stretching from the Canada line far into the heart of New York, invite the invader; while Lakes Erie and Ontario afforded an opportunity for attacking the Americans on what was then, practically, their western frontier.

The Americans were not slow in perceiving the dangers that threatened their north-western frontier, and began to prepare for its defence most energetically at the first declaration of war. It was a work that taxed to the utmost the resources of the young country. The shores of the lakes as far west as Detroit were open to the attacks of the enemy, and, although part of the territory of the United States, were really more accessible to the invaders than to the American defenders. The population was sparse, and the means of transportation very primitive. Before the days of railroads, canals, or even well-kept turnpikes, troops, seamen, ordnance, and all munitions of war could only be transported from the cities on the seacoast by the most laborious hauling over roads hardly worthy of the name. Nor was the transportation problem solved during the continuance of the war. When in May, 1814, the new United States frigate "Superior" lay at her dock at Sackett's Harbor, her ordnance, stores, and cordage had to be brought from Oswego Falls, some fifty miles away. A clear water-route by the Oswego River and the lake offered itself; but Sir James Yeo, with his squadron, was blockading the

mouth of the harbor, and the chance for blockade-runners was small indeed. To carry the heavy ordnance and cables overland, was out of the question. The dilemma was most perplexing, but Yankee ingenuity finally enabled the "Superior" to get her outfit. The equipment was loaded upon a small fleet of barges and scows, which a veteran lake captain took to a point sixteen miles from the blockaded harbor. By sailing by night, and skulking up creeks and inland water-ways, the transports reached this point without attracting the attention of the blockading fleet. They had, however, hardly arrived when news of the enterprise came to the ears of the British, and an expedition was sent to intercept the Americans, which expedition the Yankees successfully resisted. The question then arose as to how the stores were to be taken across the sixteen miles of marsh and forest that lay between the boats and the navy-yard at Sackett's Harbor. The cannon and lighter stores were transported on heavy carts with great difficulty, but there still remained the great cable. How to move this was a serious question. No cart could bear its ponderous weight of ninety-six hundred pounds. Again Yankee ingenuity and pluck came to the rescue. Two hundred men volunteered to carry the great rope on their shoulders, and in this way it actually was transported. Along the shore of the little creek the great cable was stretched out with prodigious labor, and lay there looking like a gigantic serpent. The two hundred men ranged themselves along the line at regular intervals, and at a given signal hoisted the burden to their shoulders. At the word of command, all stepped off briskly together, and the long line wound along the narrow path through the forests. They started out cheerily enough, enlivening the work with songs and jests; but at the end of the first mile all were glad enough to throw down the load, and loiter a while by the roadside. A few minutes' rest, and up and on again. Now arms began to ache, and shoulders to chafe, under the unusual burden; but the march continued until noon of the next day, when the footsore and weary carriers marched proudly into Sackett's Harbor, to find sailors and soldiers assembled to greet them with bands and cannon-firing. In accordance with the custom of the time, these demonstrations of honor were supplemented by the opening of a barrel of whiskey, in honor of the arrival of the cable.

This incident, trivial in itself, is typical of that ingenuity and fertility

of resource, which, more than any thing else, contributed to the success of the Americans, not only in the lake operations of the war of 1812, but in every war the nation has since undertaken. But the advantages gained by Yankee enterprise and ingenuity were, perhaps, more evident in the operations on Lake Ontario and Lake Erie than in the operations of the armies, or of the fleets upon the ocean. The great contest lay more in the rapid building of ships than in fighting them. At the outset the enemy were better equipped for the struggle than were the Americans. The Canadian frontier had been longer settled, and could lend more men to the needs of the nation. More than this, the route to the ocean by the St. Lawrence River made it really easier to transport naval stores from far-off Liverpool to the British naval station on the shores of Lake Ontario, than to carry like goods across the wooded hills of New York. Nor were the British altogether without naval resources upon the lakes at the hour when war was declared. On Lake Erie the English flag waved over the "Royal George," twenty-two; "Prince Regent," sixteen; "Earl of Moira," fourteen; "Gloucester," ten; "Seneca," eight; and "Simcoe," eight. Opposed to this squadron was but one United States vessel, — the "Oneida," a man-of-war brig carrying sixteen twenty-four-pound carronades. On Lake Erie the British had a squadron of six vessels, carrying in all forty-six guns.

Hostilities opened early on Lake Ontario. For some time before the formal declaration of war, a desultory warfare had been waged by the Americans and Canadians about Niagara. Canadian schooners had been seized on account of alleged violations of the revenue and embargo regulations of the United States. The resentment of the sufferers was aroused, and they only awaited a suitable opportunity to retaliate. The opportunity soon came, in the form of the declaration of war; and a body of Canadian volunteers attacked eight American schooners, near the Thousand Isles, and burned two of them.

With the opening of the war, the United States authorities had fixed upon Sackett's Harbor as the naval station for Lake Ontario. In the harbor, on the 19th of July, 1812, lay the "Oneida," which had lately come into port after a short cruise in search of British schooners. At early dawn of the day mentioned, the lookout reported five ships in the offing, and a few minutes later hailed the deck, to report them to be

British ships-of-war. The alarm quickly spread over the little town. Puny though the British fleet would have appeared upon the ocean, it was of ample power to take the "Oneida" and destroy the village. Before the villagers fairly understood their peril, a small boat came scudding into the harbor before the wind. It bore a message from the British commander, demanding that the "Oneida" and the "Lord Nelson" (a captured Canadian vessel) be surrendered. Should the squadron be resisted, he warned the inhabitants that their town should be burned to the ground.

Commander Woolsey, who commanded the "Oneida," was a United States officer of the regular service, and a man of courage and fertility of resource. Unable to take his vessel out into the lake, he moored her at the entrance of the harbor in such a way that her broadside of nine guns might be brought to bear on the enemy. All hands then set to work getting the other broadside battery ashore; and, by the aid of the villagers, these guns were mounted on a hastily thrown up redoubt on the shore. At the foot of the main street of the village was planted a queerly assorted battery. The great gun, on which the hopes of the Americans centred, was an iron thirty-two-pounder, which had lain for years deeply embedded in the muddy ooze of the lake-shore, gaining thereby the derisive name of the "Old Sow." This redoubtable piece of ordnance was flanked on either side by a brass six-pounder; a pair of cannon that the Yankee sailors had, with infinite pains and indomitable perseverance, dredged up from the sunken hulk of a British war-vessel that had filled a watery grave some years. Two brass nine-pounders completed this novel armament.

It was about eight o'clock in the morning when the British vessels came up within range. Alarm guns had been firing from the shore all the morning; and by that time the village was filled with militia-men, who flocked to the scene of action. Woolsey, who had taken charge of the shore-batteries, ordered a shot from the thirty-two pounder. The "old sow" spoke out bravely, but the shot missing, only roused the enemy to laughter, which could be heard on shore. The British vessels then began a vigorous cannonade, keeping well out of range of the small guns on shore; although so weak were the American defences, that a vigorous onslaught by the enemy would have quickly reduced the town to submis-

sion. As it was, a harmless fire was kept up for about two hours. Not a shot took effect, and nothing save the noise and excitement of the cannonading need have deterred the good people of Sackett's Harbor from observing that Sunday morning in accordance with their usual sabbath customs. It was reserved for one shot to put an end to this strange engagement. Just as the artillerists who served the iron thirty-two pounder were loading the gun, a cannon-ball struck the ground near the battery. One of the Americans ran, and, picking up the spent ball, brought it into the battery, saying, "I've been playing ball with the red-coats, and have caught them out. Let's see now if they can catch back again." So saying, he rammed the missile down the muzzle of the long thirty-two, and sent it back with deadly aim. The captured ball crashed into the stern of the "Royal George," raked her from stem to stern, killing fourteen men, and wounding eighteen in its course. The marksman, watching the course of his shot, saw the splinters fly from the deck of the British ship; and the Americans cheered loudly for the "old sow" as the British squadron put about, and left the Sackett's Harbor people to celebrate their easily won victory.

Insignificant though this engagement was, it was the chief battle of the year on Lake Ontario. The Americans strained every nerve to put more armed vessels afloat, and, being left unmolested by the British, managed to have quite a flotilla in commission before winter set its icy seal upon the lake. In September, Capt. Isaac Chauncey was appointed commander-in-chief of the lake navy; and, on his arrival, he proved himself the very man for the place. He rushed ahead the building of new ships, arranged for the transportation of seamen from the seacoast to man the vessels on the lakes, and then, not content with attending only to the building of the ships, took command of the squadron in commission, and fairly swept the lake clear of the enemy's vessels. He met with little opposition as the British retired to their naval station at Kingston, remaining there until all further naval operations were checked by the ice.

Winter, which seriously impeded the work of the British by putting an end to navigation upon the St. Lawrence, did away with many of the difficulties of transportation which had so hampered the Americans. The roads to the seacoast grew hard, and were soon covered with snow,

over which long teams of oxen plodded to and fro until the path was well broken. Then began the hauling of supplies from the seaboard. From his post at Sackett's Harbor, Chauncey sent out requisitions for ship-timber, cordage, ordnance, and ship-carpenters. Long trains of heavily laden wagons and sledges wound their way across the State from New York or Albany to the station at Sackett's Harbor. Agents were appointed in the seacoast towns to enlist seamen for service on the lakes, — a work that required no small powers of persuasion; for the true salt-water jack looks with great disfavor upon the "fish-ponds" of fresh water. But, by dint of munificent offers of bounties and prize-money, several hundred sailors were induced to leave their ships on the ocean, and take service in the infant navy of the lakes.

Most of the sailors were sent across the State in the dead of winter. The trip was made in huge sleds, drawn by several pairs of horses, and carrying a score or more men each. The jackies enlivened the journey with rollicking songs and stories as the sleds sped over the well-packed roads through the sparsely settled country. One of the largest parties was accompanied by a brass band, with the aid of which the sailors made their entrance to the villages along the road in truly royal style. The sleighs and horses were gayly decked with the national colors. The band led in the first sleigh, closely followed by three other sledges, filled with blue-coated men. Before the little tavern of the town the *cortége* usually came to a halt; and the tars, descending, followed up their regulation cheers with demands for grog and provender. After a halt of an hour or two, the party continued its way, followed by the admiration of every villager, and the envy of every boy large enough to have seafaring ambitions.

With all his energy and unswerving fidelity to the cause of his country, Chauncey probably did nothing of more direct benefit to the United States than writing a letter to a young naval officer, then stationed at Newport, asking him to come West and take charge of the naval operations on Lake Erie. The name of this young officer was Oliver Hazard Perry, and a year later no name in American history carried with it more fame.

Hostilities on Lake Erie had been unimportant up to the time that Chauncey sent for Perry. The Americans had no naval vessel to oppose

to the fleet of Canadian craft that held the lake. One war-vessel only had shown the American flag on the lake; and she had been fitted out by the army, and had fallen into the hands of the enemy at the surrender of Detroit. But this prize was not destined to remain long in the hands of the Canadians. Early in the autumn of 1812, Chauncey had sent Lieut. Elliott to Lake Erie, with instructions to begin at once the creation of a fleet by building or purchasing vessels. Elliott chose as the site of his improvised navy-yard Black Rock, a point two miles below Buffalo; and there pushed ahead his work in a way that soon convinced the enemy, that, unless the young officer's energy received a check, British supremacy on Lake Erie would soon be at an end. Accordingly, two armed brigs, the "Caledonia" and the "Detroit," recently captured by the British, came down to put an end to the Yankee ship-building. Like most of the enemy's vessels on the lakes, these two brigs were manned by Canadians, and had not even the advantage of a regular naval commander.

On the morning of the 8th of October, the sentries on the river-side at Black Rock discovered the two British vessels lying at anchor under the guns of Fort Erie, a British work on the opposite side of the Niagara River, that there flows placidly along, a stream more than a mile wide. Zealous for distinction, and determined to checkmate the enemy in their design, Elliott resolved to undertake the task of cutting out the two vessels from beneath the guns of the British fort. Fortune favored his enterprise. It happened that on that very day a detachment of sailors from the ocean had arrived at Black Rock. Though wearied by their long overland journey, the jackies were ready for the adventure, but had no weapons. In this dilemma Elliott was forced to turn for aid to the military authorities, from whom he obtained pistols, swords, and sabres enough to fit out his sailors for the fray. With the arms came a number of soldiers and a small party of adventurous citizens, all of whom enlisted under the leadership of the adventurous Elliott. In planning the expedition, the great difficulty lay in getting rid of the too numerous volunteers.

By nightfall, the preparations for the expedition were completed. In the underbrush that hung over the banks of the river, two large boats were concealed, ready for the embarkation. At midnight fifty men, armed to the teeth, silently took their places in each of the great barges, and pushed out upon the black surface of the river. All along the bank

were crowds of eager watchers, who discussed the chances of success with bated breath, lest the merest whisper should alarm the British sentries on the farther shore. With steady strokes of the muffled oars, the two boats made their way toward the two brigs that could just be seen outlined against the sky. Elliott, in the first boat, directed the movements of his men, and restrained the too enthusiastic. So stealthy was the approach, that the foremost boat was fairly alongside of the "Detroit" before the British took the alarm. Then the quick hail of the sentry brought an answering pistol-shot from Elliott; and, amid volleys of musketry, the assailants clambered up the sides of the brigs, and with pistol and cutlass drove the startled crew below. So complete was the surprise, that the British made but little resistance; and the cables of the brigs were cut, sails spread, and the vessels under way, before the thunder of a gun from Fort Erie told that the British on shore had taken the alarm.

At the report of the first shot fired, the dark line of the American shore suddenly blazed bright with huge beacon fires, while lanterns and torches were waved from commanding points to guide the adventurous sailors in their navigation of the captured brigs. But the victors were not to escape unscathed with their booty. The noise of the conflict, and the shouts of the Americans on the distant bank of the river, roused the British officers in the fort, and the guns were soon trained on the receding vessels. Some field-batteries galloped along the bank, and soon had their guns in a position whence they could pour a deadly fire upon the Americans. Nor did the spectators on the New York side of the river escape unharmed; for the first shot fired by the field-battery missed the brigs, but crossed the river and struck down an American officer. Almost unmanageable in the swift current and light wind, the two brigs seemed for a time in danger of recapture. The "Caledonia" was run ashore under the guns of an American battery; but the "Detroit," after being relieved of the prisoners, and deserted by her captors, was beached at a point within range of the enemy's fire. The British made several determined attempts to recapture her, but were beaten off; and, after a day's fighting around the vessel, she was set on fire and burned to the water's edge. The "Caledonia," however, remained to the Americans, and some months later did good service against her former owners.

It was shortly after this occurrence that Lieut. Perry offered his

services for the lakes; and four months later he received a letter from Chauncey, saying, "You are the very person that I want for a particular service, in which you may gain reputation for yourself, and honor for your country." This letter was quickly followed by orders from the Secretary of the Navy to report at once for duty to Chauncey at Sackett's Harbor. Perry was overjoyed. The dull monotony of his duties at Newport suited little his ardent nature. He longed for active service, and an opportunity to win distinction. His opportunity had at last come; and twenty hours after the receipt of his orders, he and his thirteen-year-old brother were seated in a sleigh and fairly started on the long drive across the country. Travelling was a serious matter in those days, and the journey from Newport to Sackett's Harbor required twelve days.

On his arrival, Perry found that the special service for which he was needed was the command of a naval force on Lake Erie. He stopped but a short time at Sackett's Harbor, and then pressed on to Erie, the base of the naval operations on the lake of the same name. It was late in March when Perry arrived; and the signs of spring already showed that soon the lake would be clear of ice, and the struggle for its control recommence. The young lieutenant was indefatigable in the labor of preparation. He urged on the building of vessels already begun. He arranged for the purchase of merchant schooners, and their conversion into gunboats. He went to Pittsburg for supplies, and made a flying trip to Buffalo to join Chauncey in an attack upon Fort George at the mouth of the Niagara River. All the time, he managed to keep up a constant fire of letters to the Secretary of the Navy and to Chauncey, begging for more sailors. By summertime, he had five vessels ready for service, but no men to man them. The enemy blockaded him, and he dared not accept the challenge. In July he wrote to Chauncey: "The enemy's fleet of six sail are now off the bar of this harbor. What a golden opportunity if we had men! . . . Give me men, sir, and I will acquire both for you and myself honor and glory on this lake, or perish in the attempt." Again he wrote: "For God's sake, and yours and mine, send me men and officers; and I will have them all [the British squadron] in a day or two." When the men finally did arrive, he was much disgusted with their appearance, pronouncing them to be "a motley set,

— blacks, soldiers, and boys." Nevertheless, this same motley crew, headed by the critical young officer, won a victory that effectually crushed the pretensions of the enemy to the control of Lake Erie.

His crews having arrived, Perry was anxious to get out upon the lake, and engage the enemy at once. But this course of action was for a long time impossible. The flotilla lay snugly anchored within the

PERRY'S RECRUITS.

harbor of Erie, the entrance to which was closed by a bar. To cross this bar, the ships would have been obliged to send all heavy ordnance ashore; and, as the enemy kept close watch outside the harbor, the American fleet was practically blockaded. For several weeks the Americans were thus kept prisoners, grumbling mightily at their enforced

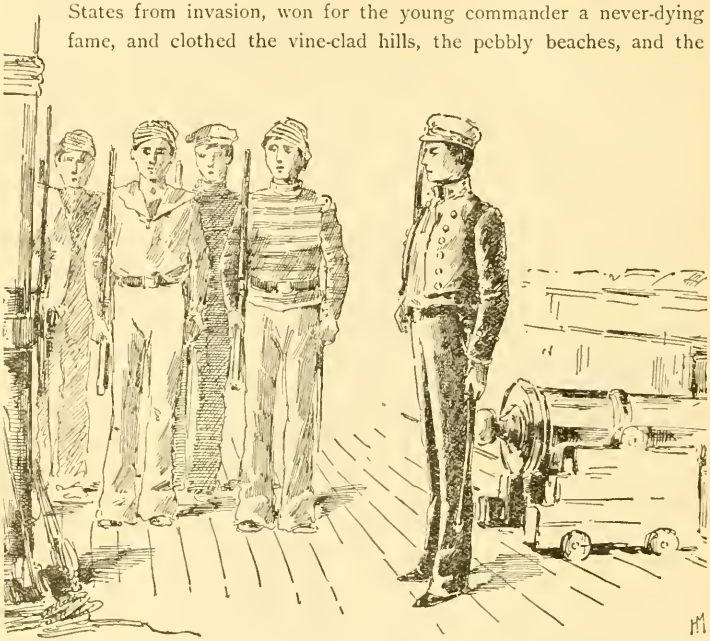
inaction, and longing for a chance to get at the enemy. One morning in August word was brought to Perry that the blockading fleet had disappeared. Instantly all was life and bustle in the harbor. The crews of all the vessels were ordered aboard; and the flotilla dropped down to the bar, intending to cross early in the morning. At dawn the movement was begun. The schooners and other small craft were easily taken outside; but, when it came to the turn of the two gun-brigs, "Lawrence" and "Niagara," it became evident that mechanical assistance was required. Accordingly, a powerful "camel" was hastily improvised, by the aid of which the two vessels were dragged across the bar. Hardly had the second brig made the passage in safety, when the British fleet appeared in the offing. Tradition says that the opportune absence of the enemy's fleet was caused by a public banquet to which the citizens of Port Dover had invited Commodore Barclay and his officers. While the dinner was going merrily on, the Americans were hard at work, escaping from the trap in which the British had left them. In responding to a toast at the banquet, Barclay said, "I expect to find the Yankee brigs hard and fast on the bar at Erie when I return, in which predicament it will be but a small job to destroy them." His anticipations were not realized; for, on his arrival, he found the entire squadron safely floating in the deep water outside the bar.

Had Barclay but known it, he would even then have found it "but a small job to destroy them;" for the two brigs, having been stripped of their ordnance, would have been easy prey for the British squadron. But Perry's bold action in sending forward two schooners to engage the enemy seemed to alarm the too prudent commodore; and the British bore away, and were soon out of sight.

By night Perry's flotilla was in readiness for cruising, and set out immediately in pursuit of the foe. Barclay seemed to avoid the conflict; and, after some weeks' cruising, the Americans cast anchor at Put-in-Bay, and awaited there the appearance of the enemy.

The little flotilla that lay anchored on the placid waters of the picturesque bay consisted of nine vessels, ranging in size from the "Trippe," a puny sloop carrying one gun, to the "Lawrence" and "Niagara," brigs carrying each two long twelves and eighteen short thirty-twos. No very formidable armada was that of a handful of pygmy vessels, commanded by

a young officer who had never heard the thunderous cannonade of a naval battle, or seen the decks of his ships stained with the blood of friends and daily companions. Yet the work of the little squadron saved the United States from invasion, won for the young commander a never-dying fame, and clothed the vine-clad hills, the pebbly beaches, and the



DRILLING THE RAW RECRUITS.

crystal waters of Put-in-Bay with a wealth of proud, historical associations.

Day after day the vessels lay idly at their anchorage, and the sailors grew restless at the long inactivity. Perry alone was patient; for to him had come the knowledge that the hostile fleet was getting short of supplies, and would soon be starved out of its retreat at Malden. Knowing this, he spared no pains to get his men into training for the coming conflict. They were exercised daily at the great guns, and put through severe drills in the use of the cutlass, in boarding, and repelling boarders. By constant drill and severe discipline, Perry had made of the motley crew

sent him a well-drilled body of seamen, every man of whom had become fired with the enthusiasm of his commander.

As the time passed, and the day of battle drew nearer, Perry's confidence in his men increased; and he looked upon the coming conflict as one certain to bring glory to his country. At early dawn the jackies on the ships could see the slender form of their commander perched upon the craggy heights of one of the islands, called to this day "Perry's Lookout," eagerly scanning the horizon in the direction of Malden. On the night of Sept. 9, 1813, the commodore felt convinced that on the next day the British would come out to battle. Accordingly, a conference of captains was called in the cabin of the flag-ship, and each received directions as to his course of action during the fight. They were urged to force the fighting to close quarters. Said Perry, "Nelson has expressed my idea in the words, 'If you lay your enemy alongside, you cannot be out of your place.'" As the officers were about to depart, Perry drew from a locker a large, square blue flag, on which appeared, in white letters, the dying words of the gallant Lawrence, "DON'T GIVE UP THE SHIP!" "This," said Perry, "shall be the signal for action; and when it appears at the masthead, remember your instructions." The conference then ended; and the captains returned to their ships across the bay, silvered by the light of the moon, to spend the greater part of the night in preparations for the great danger of the coming day.

Morning dawned bright and clear, with a light breeze blowing, that broke into ripples the surface of the land-locked bay. The rosy light of the rising sun was just reddening the eastern horizon, when, from the lookout in the foretop of the "Lawrence," came the long-drawn hail of "Sail, ho!" quickly repeated from the other vessels.

Perry was already on deck. "What does it look like?" he shouted to the lookout.

"A clump of square rigged, and fore and afters, sir," was the response.

In a few minutes the signals "Enemy in sight," and "Get under way," were flying from the masthead of the flag-ship; and the merry piping of the boatswains' whistles, and the measured tramp of the sailors around the capstans, told that signals were observed, and were being obeyed.

The fleet was soon threading its way through the narrow channels, filled with islands, at the entrance to the bay, and finally came into line

on the open lake. Not a cloud was in the sky. The lake was calm, with enough wind blowing to admit of manœuvring, yet gentle enough to be of advantage to the schooners that made up the greater part of each fleet.

For some time the Americans held back, manœuvring to get the weather-gauge; but Perry's impatience for the fray got the better of his caution, and he determined to close at once. His first officer remonstrated, saying, "Then you'll have to engage the enemy to leeward."

"I don't care," responded the commodore. "Leeward or windward, they shall fight to-day." Then, turning to the quartermaster, he called for the battle-flag, which being brought, he mustered the crew aft, and addressed them briefly, telling them of the task before them, and urging them to fight bravely for the victory. "My brave lads," he concluded, "this flag bears the last words of Capt. Lawrence. Shall I hoist it?"

"Ay, ay, sir!" cried the jackies, in unison; and, as the flag was swiftly run to the masthead, the cheers of the sailors on the deck of the "Lawrence" were echoed from the neighboring vessels, as the white letters showed boldly against the blue flag, bearing to each commander the exhortation, "Don't give up the ship!"

The battle-signal being thus displayed, the vessels moved onward to the attack. As the crew of the "Lawrence" stood at their guns, the cooks passed along the decks, handing to each man a bit of food, that his strength might not leave him in the coming struggle. Then followed boys with boxes of sand, which they strewed upon the decks, to afford a firm foothold for the men at the guns. The hammocks were stowed along the nettings, to serve as some little protection against flying shot. The men stood silent and pale at their quarters, each occupied with his own grave thoughts, but all determined to fight like brave men and true for the honor of the flag. By Perry's side stood his brother, a boy thirteen years old, armed and ready to do his duty as well as the older men.

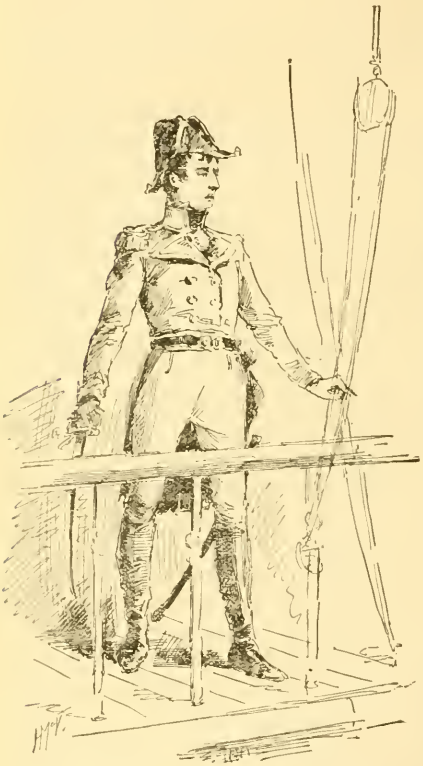
The British came on gallantly. Barclay had lost all his diffidence, and brought up his vessels like a veteran. His ships were kept close together; the ship "Detroit" under short sail, that the pygmy sloop "Little Belt" might not be left in the rear. The Americans came down in single file, headed by the schooner "Scorpion." Suddenly through the still air rang out the sharp notes of a bugle-call on the enemy's

flag-ship. It was the signal for action; and, as the last notes died away, the bands struck up "Rule, Britannia." The Americans answered with cheers; and in the midst of the cheering, a jet of smoke and fire spurted from the side of the "Detroit," and a heavy shot splashed into the water near the "Lawrence," while a dull, heavy report came booming over the water.

The battle was opened, but five minutes elapsed before a second shot was fired. When it did come, it crashed through the bulwarks of the "Lawrence," and sped across her deck, doing no great damage. "Steady, lads, steady," cried Perry, from his post on the quarter-deck, as he saw an uneasy stir among his men, who longed to return the fire. The commodore was determined to fight at close quarters, and hung out signals for each ship to choose its antagonist, and fight the fight out for itself.

It was then high noon, and the battle soon became general. The little schooners "Scorpion" and "Ariel" pluckily kept their place in the van of the American line, but the fire of the enemy fell most fiercely upon the flag-ship "Lawrence." No less than four vessels at one time were grouped about the "Lawrence," pouring in a destructive fire, and bent upon destoying the flag-ship and her brave commander; then taking the smaller vessels in detail. The "Lawrence" fought bravely, but the odds were too great. The carronades with which she was armed were no match for the long guns of her adversaries. For two hours the unequal combat raged, and no American vessel came to the aid of the sorely smitten flag-ship. Amid the hail of cannon-balls and bullets, Perry seemed to bear a charmed life. He saw his officers and men falling all about him. John Brooks, the lieutenant of marines, fought by the commodore's side. While speaking cheerfully to the commodore, a cannon-ball struck the young lieutenant on the hip, dashing him across the deck against the bulwark, and mutilating him so, that he plead piteously with Perry, imploring that he might be put out of his misery with a pistol-shot. From this awful spectacle Perry turned to speak to the captain of a gun, when the conversation was abruptly cut short by a shot which killed the seaman instantly. Perry returned to the quarter-deck. The first lieutenant came rushing up, his face bloody, and his nose swelled to an enormous size from a splinter which had perforated it. "All the officers in my division are killed," he cried. "For God's sake, give me more!" Perry sent some men to his

aid; but they soon fell, and the cry for more men arose again. One of the surgeons who served in the cockpit on that dreadful day states, that, in the midst of the roar of battle, Perry's voice was heard calling down the hatchway, and asking any surgeon's mates who could be spared, to come on deck and help work the guns. Several went up; but the appeal was soon repeated, and more responded. When no more men could be obtained, the voice of the commodore took a pleading tone. "Can any of the wounded pull a rope?" said he; and such was his ascendency over the men, that several poor mangled fellows dragged themselves on deck, and lent their feeble strength to the working of the guns.



COMMODORE PERRY AT THE BATTLE OF LAKE ERIE.

Amid all the carnage, the sailors were quick to notice the lighter incidents of the fray. Even the cock-pit, filled with the wounded, and reeking with blood that dripped through the cracks in the deck above, once resounded with laughter as hearty as ever greeted a middy's after-dinner joke in the steerage. Lieut. Yarnall received a bad scalp-wound, which fairly drenched his face with blood. As he groped his way towards the cock-pit, he passed a lot of hammocks stuffed with "cat-tails" which had been stowed on the bulwarks. The feathery down of the "cat-tails" filled the air, and settled thick upon the head and face

T. Macdonough

COMMODORE MACDONOUGH

Stephen Decatur

COMMODORE DECATUR

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PERRY'S VICTORY—THE BATTLE OF LAKE ERIE, SEPTEMBER 10, 1813

COMMODORE PERRY

of the officer, robbing his countenance of all semblance to a human face. As he descended the ladder to the cock-pit, his owl-like air roused the wounded to great shouts of laughter. "The Devil has come among us," they cried.

While talking to his little brother, Perry to his horror saw the lad fall at his feet, dashed to the deck by an unseen missile. The commodore's agony may be imagined; but it was soon assuaged, for the boy was only stunned, and was soon fighting again at his post. The second lieutenant was struck by a spent grape-shot, and fell stunned upon the deck. He lay there for a time, unnoticed. Perry raised him up, telling him he was not hurt, as no blood could be seen. The lieutenant put his hand to his clothing, at the point where the blow had fallen, and discovered the shot lodged in his coat. Coolly putting it in his pocket, he remarked, "You are right: I am not hurt. But this is my shot," and forthwith returned to his duty.

It was a strange-looking body of men that fought at the guns of the "Lawrence." Lean, angular Yankee sailors from the seafaring communities of New England stood by the side of swarthy negroes, who, with their half-naked black bodies, in the dense powder-smoke, seemed like fiends in pandemonium. In the rigging were stationed a number of Kentucky riflemen, who had volunteered to serve during the battle. The buckskin shirts and leggings gave an air of incongruity to their presence on a man-of-war. Their unerring rifles, however, did brave service for the cause of the stars and stripes. At the opening of the action, two tall Indians, decked in all the savage finery of war-paint and feathers, strode the deck proudly. But water is not the Indian's element, and the battle had hardly begun when one fled below in terror; the other remained on deck, and was killed early in the action.

Courageous and self-confident though the American commander was, the moment came when he could no longer disguise the fact that his gallant flag-ship was doomed to destruction before the continuous and deadly fire of her adversaries. There was but one course of action open, and upon this he determined at once. He would transfer his flag to the "Niagara," and from the deck of that vessel direct the movements of his fleet. Accordingly, the only uninjured boat of the "Lawrence" was

lowered; and Perry sprang into the stern, followed by his little brother. Before the boat pushed off, the battle-flag was thrown into her; and, wrapping it about him, Perry took a standing position in the stern, and ordered the oarsmen to give way. He steered straight for the "Niagara," through the very centre of the fight. The enemy quicky grasped the

MAKING READY TO LEAVE THE "LAWRENCE."

purpose of the movement, and great guns and muskets were trained on the little boat. Shot of all sizes splashed in the water about the boat, splintered the oars, and buried themselves in the gunwale. The crew begged their commander to sit down, and make himself a less conspicuous target for the fire of the enemy; but Perry paid but little attention

to their entreaties. Suddenly the men rested on the oars, and the boat stopped. Angrily the commodore demanded the cause of the stoppage, and was told that the men refused to row unless he sat down. With a smile he yielded, and soon the boat was alongside the "Niagara." Perry sprang to the deck, followed by his boat's crew and a plucky sailor who had swum just behind the boat across the long stretch of water. Hardly a glance did the commodore cast at the ship which he had left, but bent all his faculties to taking the new flag-ship into the battle.

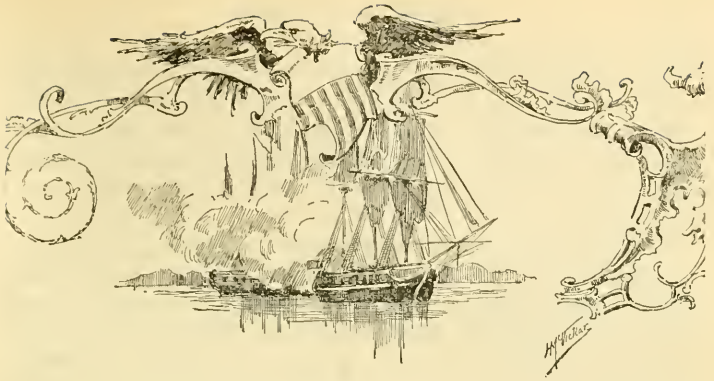
The "Niagara" was practically a fresh ship; for, up to this time, she had held strangely aloof from the battle. Now all was to be changed. The battle-flag went to her masthead; and she plunged into the thick of the fight, striking thunderous blows at every ship she encountered. As she passed the American lines, the sailors greeted with cheers their gallant commander. The crippled "Lawrence," an almost helpless hulk, left far behind, was forced to strike her flag; although her crew protested loudly, crying out, "Sink the ship, and let us go down with her." But the conquered vessel was not destined to fall into the hands of her enemies. Already the sight of their commodore on a fresh vessel stimulated the American tars; so that in half an hour the British line was broken, their ships cut to pieces, and the "Detroit," their flag-ship, a prize to the "Niagara." A white handkerchief was waved at the end of a pike by one of the crew of the "Princess Charlotte." The firing stopped, the flag was again run up to the masthead of the "Lawrence," while a few feeble cheers came faintly over the water from the remnant of her crew.

The dense clouds of smoke blowing away, Perry saw, by the disposition of his squadron, that the victory was secure. Hastily catching off his navy-cap, he laid upon it a sheet of paper torn from an old letter, and wrote to Gen. Harrison the famous despatch, "*We have met the enemy, and they are ours, — two ships, two brigs, one schooner, and one sloop.*"

Then, with true chivalry, he determined that to his flag-ship "Lawrence," that had so stoutly borne the brunt of battle, should belong the honor of receiving the British captains, when they came to surrender their vessels. He returned to the "Lawrence;" but the scene there was such that even the excitement of victory could raise no feelings of exultation in his breast. He saw on every side the bodies of officers with whom, but the night before, he had dined in perfect health. The

decks were red with blood, and from the cock-pit arose the groans of the wounded.

After the formal surrender, to make which the officers picked their way over the deck covered with slain to the quarter-deck, the work of burying the dead of both squadrons was begun. It was about sundown that the sad ceremonies were held; and, as the deep tones of the chaplains reading the burial-service arose upon the evening air, the dull, mournful splashing of heavy bodies in the water told that the last scene in the great victory was drawing to an end.



## CHAPTER VIII.

ON THE OCEAN. — THE "HORNET" SINKS THE "PEACOCK." — THE BLOCKADE. — ADVENTURES OF THE "SALLY." — HOSTILITIES ON CHESAPEAKE BAY. — THE CRUISE OF THE "PRESIDENT."

THE year 1813, that brought to American sailors upon the lakes such well-earned laurels, opened auspiciously for the stars and stripes upon the ocean. It will be remembered that the "Constitution," while on the cruise in the South Atlantic that ended with the destruction of the "Java," had left the "Hornet" off San Salvador, blockading the British ship "Bonne Citoyenne." For eighteen days the "Hornet" remained at her post. Her captain continually urged the enemy to come out and give him battle, but to no avail. The remembrance of his valuable cargo deterred the Englishman, and he remained snug in his harbor. Months after, when the occurrence became known in the United States, an unreasoning outcry was raised against the commander of the "Bonne Citoyenne" for thus avoiding the conflict; but naval men have always agreed that his action was wise and commendable.

After eighteen days' service on this blockade, the "Hornet" saw a British seventy-four bearing down upon her, bent upon releasing the treasure-ship. Against such odds it would have been folly to contend;

and the Americans, taking advantage of a dark night, slipped away, and were soon beyond pursuit. The vessel continued her cruise in the waters south of the equator, meeting with good fortune, and taking many valuable prizes, from one of which twenty-three thousand dollars in specie were taken. But her cruise was not destined to proceed without serious opposition.

On the 24th of February, as the "Hornet" was giving close chase to a suspicious brig near the mouth of the Demarara River, a second stranger was sighted in the offing. Giving no heed to the newly sighted vessel, the "Hornet" continued her chase until the rapidly approaching vessel was clearly made out to be a brig, flying the British flag, and evidently a man-of-war. The "Hornet" was immediately cleared for action; and the two hostile vessels began manœuvring for the weather-gage, as two scientific pugilists spar cautiously for an opening. In this contest of seamanship, Capt. Lawrence of the "Hornet" proved the victor; and a little after five o'clock in the afternoon, the two enemies stood for each other upon the wind, the "Hornet" having the weather-gage. As they rapidly neared each other, no sound was heard save the creaking of the cordage, and the dashing of the waves against the vessels' hulls. Not a shot was fired until the enemies were dashing past each other, going in opposite directions. The first broadsides were exchanged at half pistol-shot, with very unequal effects. The shot of the "Hornet" penetrated the hull of her antagonist, doing terrible execution; while the broadside let fly by the "Peacock" whistled through the rigging of the American ship, cutting away the pennant, and killing a topman, who was struck by a round shot, and dashed from his station in the mizzen-top, to fall mangled and lifeless into the sea.

Hardly were the ships clear, when the British captain put his helm hard up, — a manœuvre executed with the intention of securing a raking position. But the plan was balked by the cool seamanship of Capt. Lawrence, who quickly followed up the British vessel, and, getting a position on his quarter, poured in so rapid and accurate a fire that the enemy was fain to haul down his colors and confess defeat. The British ensign had hardly touched the deck, when it was run up again, with the union down, as a token of distress. At this sight, the Yankee tars, who had been cheering lustily over their quickly won victory, stopped their rejoi

cings, and set about giving assistance to the injured Britons with as hearty good-will as they had lately shown in their vigorous cannonade.

With all possible despatch, a boat was lowered, and Lieut. Shubrick proceeded on board the prize. He found the "Peacock" a complete wreck. Shortly after the surrender her main-mast had gone by the board, and her hull was fairly honeycombed with shot-holes. Returning to his ship, Shubrick reported the condition of the prize. He was immediately ordered to return to the "Peacock," and make every effort to save her. Accompanied by three boats' crews of American sailors, he again boarded the sinking ship, and bent every energy to the attempt for her salvation. Bulwarks were cut away, and the heavy guns were rolled out of the gaps thus made, and cast into the sea. Deep down in the hold, and swinging like spiders over the sides of the vessels, sailors tried to stop up with felt-covered blocks of wood the great holes through which the water was pouring. All the time boats were plying between the sinking vessel and the "Hornet," transferring the wounded and the prisoners. Twilight fell before the work was ended, and it became evident to all that the "Peacock" must sink during the night. But the end came even quicker than had been expected. Some new rent must have opened in the brig's side; for, with a sudden lurch, she commenced to sink rapidly, bow foremost. Several of the English crew were below, searching for liquor; and, caught by the inpouring flood, they found a watery grave in the sinking hulk. Three Americans were also ingulfed; and five narrowly escaped death by climbing up the rigging to the foretop, which remained above water when the hull rested upon the bottom. In the midst of the excitement and confusion, four British seamen slyly clambered out of the cabin-windows, and, dropping into a boat that was made fast to the stern, made off in the darkness. The Americans, eagerly watching the sinking ship, did not detect the fugitives until the boat was far beyond the possibility of recapture.

The vessel so quickly destroyed by the "Hornet" was the British man-of-war brig "Peacock," mounting ten guns, and carrying a crew of two hundred and ten men. In one respect, she was a model ship. Among naval men, she had long been known as "the yacht," on account of the appearance of exquisite neatness she always presented. Her decks were as white as lime-juice and constant holystoning could keep them.

The brass-work about the cabins and the breeches of the guns was dazzling in its brilliancy. White canvas lined the breechings of the carronades. Her decks everywhere showed signs of constant toil in the cause of cleanliness. The result of the battle, however, seemed to indicate that Capt. Peakes had erred, in that, while his ship was perfect, his men were bad marksmen, and poorly disciplined. While their shot were harmlessly passing through the rigging of the "Hornet," the Americans were pouring in well-directed broadsides, that killed and wounded thirty-eight men, and ended the action in fifteen minutes. The Americans lost but one man in the fight, though three more went down in the sinking prize.

Capt. Lawrence now found himself far from home, short of water, and crowded with prisoners. For a time, he feared that to these evils was to be added a second action, while his crew was still fatigued with the labors of the first. During the battle with the "Peacock," a second British man-of-war brig, the "Espiègle," lay quietly at anchor only four miles away. Why she had not joined in the strife, has never been explained. She was clearly visible from the tops of the "Hornet" throughout the action, and Lawrence expected every moment to see her bear down to the assistance of her consort. But she made no movement; and even after the fight ended, and the "Peacock" lay on the bottom of the ocean, the mysterious stranger awoke not from her lethargy. Not wishing to engage a second adversary while his ship was crowded with prisoners, Lawrence immediately left the scene of action, and laid his course for home. The homeward voyage was rapid and uneventful. No pains were spared to secure the comfort of the prisoners who crowded the ship. The British officers were treated with the greatest consideration; so that, as one said on quitting the ship, they "ceased to consider themselves as captives." The tars, who were consigned to the care of the blue-jackets in the forecastle, were met with less courtesy, but certainly with no less good feeling. They were not spared an occasional taunt or triumphant joke; but when it was learned that by the sinking of their ship the Britons had lost all their "toggery," the "Hornet's" lads turned to, and soon collected clothing enough to fit out each prisoner with a respectable kit.

It was the middle of March before the long, homeward voyage was

ended, and the anchor was dropped in the snug harbor of Holmes's Hole in the island of Martha's Vineyard. The usual rejoicings followed the news of the victory. Lawrence was the hero of the hour; and songs innumerable appeared in the newspapers, extolling the courage and devotion of the brave lads of the "Hornet."

Indeed, the arrival of the "Hornet" with her glorious news came at an opportune moment, to cheer the spirits of the American people. The war had begun to assume a serious aspect. Continued reverses on the ocean had roused the British ministry to the fact that they were dealing with no contemptible enemy, and the word had gone forth that the Americans must be crushed into submission. Troops were hurriedly sent to Canada, and all the vessels that could be spared were ordered to the coast of the United States. The English had determined upon that most effective of all hostile measures, — a rigorous blockade of their enemy's coast. Up and down the coast from New Jersey to the Carolinas, British frigates and sloops kept up a constant patrol. Chesapeake Bay was their chief rendezvous; and the exploits of the blockading squadron stationed there, under Admiral Cockburn, led often to scenes more befitting savage warfare then the hostilities of two enlightened and civilized peoples. On the New England coast, the blockade was less severely enforced. The people of that section had been loud in their denunciations of the war; and the British hoped, by a display of moderation, to seduce the New Englanders from their allegiance to the United States, — a hope that failed utterly of fulfilment. Even had the British desired to enforce the blockade along the New England shore, the character of the coast, and the skill and shrewdness of the Yankee skippers, would have made the task of the blockaders a most difficult one.

The annals of the little seafaring villages along the coast of Maine and Massachusetts abound in anecdotes of hardy skippers who outwitted the watchful British, and ran their little schooners or sloops into port under the very guns of a blockading man-of-war.

Among the blockade-runners of the New England coast, Capt. Dan Fernald of Portsmouth stood foremost. When a shipload of Maine timber was needed at the Portsmouth navy-yard, to be converted into a new man-of-war, to Capt. Fernald was assigned the task of bringing it down from Portland past the British frigates, that were ever on the watch for

just such cargoes. When the preparations for the building of the seventy-four-gun ship "Washington" were making at the navy-yard, Capt. Fernald was sent to Portsmouth for a load of ship's-timber. His cargo was to consist of forty-eight "knees" and the breast-hook of the seventy-four. Loaded down with this burden, the schooner "Sally" left Portland, and headed for her destination. Caution led her captain to keep his craft close to the shore, and for a day or two she crept along the coast without being discovered. But head-winds and calms delayed the "Sally," and on her fourth day out she was sighted by the British frigate "Tenedos." The "Sally" was not an imposing craft, and under ordinary circumstances she might have been allowed to proceed unmolested; but on this occasion a number of the oaken knees for the new war-vessel were piled on the deck, and the British captain could clearly make out, through his glasses, that the "Sally" was laden with contraband of war. Accordingly, he set out in hot pursuit, in the full expectation of overhauling the audacious coaster. Capt. Fernald, however, had no idea of letting his schooner fall into the hands of the British. He was a wily old skipper, and knew every nook and corner of the Maine and New Hampshire coasts better than he knew the streets of his native village. Apparently unmoved by the pursuit of the man-of-war, he stood at the tiller, and, beyond ordering his crew to shake out the reefs in the sails, seemed to make no great attempt to elude the enemy. But soon the crew noticed that the skipper was taking his schooner rather dangerously close to the shore; and a cry came from a sailor on the bow, that the "Sally" was ploughing through the kelp, and would soon be on the rocks.

"No matter," sung out the captain; "just heave over a few of them knees, and I guess she'll float clear."

Overboard went a dozen heavy timbers, and the "Sally" sailed smoothly on over the rocks. Then the captain glanced back over his shoulder, and chuckled slyly as the majestic frigate, following closely in his track, brought up all of a sudden on the rocks, and was quickly left a fixture by the receding tide. The exasperated Englishman sent two eighteen-pound shot skipping over the water after the "Sally," but without effect. One shot buried itself in the sand of the beach; and Capt. Fernald, after picking up the knees that had been thrown overboard, coolly went ashore, dug up the ball, and carried it away as a trophy. He reached his moor

ings at the navy-yard safely, and was warmly greeted by Commodore Hull, who asked if the "Sally" had been fired upon; and, on being presented with the eighteen-pound shot for a token, exclaimed, "You are a good fellow, and stand fire well."

The 'Tenedos" came not so luckily out of the adventure. By the time a flood tide lifted her clear of the reef, the jagged points of the rocks had pierced her hull, so that she leaked badly, and was forced to go to Halifax for repairs.

One more adventure in which the "Sally" and her wily captain figured is worth recounting. Again the dingy schooner was edging her way along the rugged shore, bound for the Portsmouth navy-yard. No vessel could have seemed more harmless. Her patched and dirty canvas was held in place by oft-spliced ropes and rigging none too taut. Her bluff bows butted away the waves in clouds of spray, that dashed over the decks, which seldom received other washing. Her cargo seemed to be cordwood, neatly split, and piled high on deck. While off Casco, the wind dropped down, and the "Sally" was left floating idly upon the glassy ocean. Far in the distance lay an English man-o'-war, also becalmed; but from which a long-boat, stoutly manned, soon put out, and made for the becalmed schooner. The boat was soon within hail, and a trim young officer in the stern-sheets sung out, —

"What craft's that?"

"Schooner 'Sally' of Portsmouth," came the answer, in the drawling tones of a down-east skipper.

"Where from?"

"Portland."

"Where bound?"

"Portsmouth."

"What's your cargo."

"Firewood," responded Capt. Fernald with a carelessness he was far from feeling; for deep down in the hold, under the cord-wood, were two twenty-four-pounder cannon, thirteen thousand pounds of powder, and about one hundred boarding pikes and cutlasses.

The British officer hesitated a moment, as if the little coaster was of too little importance for further examination.

"Well, I think I'll come aboard," said he carelessly, and soon stood with three or four of his men on the deck of the "Sally."

After glancing contemptuously about the ill-kept decks, he turned to his men with the sharp order: "Clear away some of that wood from the hatchways, and see what's in the hold."

The men set to work, passing the cord-wood away from the hatchways, and piling it upon the after-deck. Soon they had worked their way into the hold, and were going deeper and deeper down toward the munitions of war. Capt. Fernald's blood seemed to stop coursing in his veins. He knew that but one layer of cord-wood then lay above the cannon, and he expected every instant to see the black iron uncovered. But the British officer grew impatient.

"That's enough of that work," said he; "there's nothing but wood there. Captain, you can proceed on your course."

A momentary murmur arose from the English sailors. The "Sally" was theirs by right of capture, and they saw no reason for her liberation. "Why, lads," said the officer, "it would cost just as much to get this poor fellow's wood-schooner condemned as it would a large ship. As for the prize-money, it would not make a penny apiece." So, tumbling into their boat, the jackies pulled away; shouting to the captain of the "Sally" to stow his cargo again, or his old tub would capsize. Capt. Fernald took their jeers good-naturedly, for he was the victor in that encounter.

The occurrence had been observed from the shore; and, when the British sailors were seen swarming over the side of the "Sally," a horseman set off for Portsmouth to notify Commodore Hull that the schooner was captured. It was a sore blow; for the guns and powder were thought to be lost, and munitions of war were hard to be had at that time. But Hull soon threw aside the disappointment, and was busily engaged with plans for the vessels then building, when a sentry came in, and reported the "Sally" in sight. Hull rushed to the water-side. Sure enough, there came the battered old schooner, butting her way through the waves of the channel; and, before long, the two cannon were safe in the storehouses, while Capt. Fernald found himself vested with a reputation for almost superhuman sagacity and luck.

Not all the encounters between the blockaders and the blockade-runners terminated so happily for the Americans. Many a coasting-vessel was sent to Halifax to swell the coffers of the British prize-courts,

or, after being set on fire, was left to lie charred and ruined upon the rocky shore, as a warning to all who violated the blockade.

The capture of one United States war-vessel graced the English naval annals of January, 1813; for the little brig "Viper," carrying twelve guns, fell in the way of the British, thirty-two, "Narcissus," and straightway surrendered to the overwhelming force of her enemy.

Among the United States war-vessels caught and held in port by the blockade was the frigate "Constellation." She was at the opening of the war the favorite ship of the American navy; her exploits in the war with France having endeared her to the American people, and won for her among Frenchmen the name of "the Yankee race-horse." Notwithstanding her reputation for speed, she is said to have been very crank, and had an awkward way of getting on her beam-ends without much provocation. An almost incredible tale is told of her getting "knocked down" by a squall while chasing a French privateer, and, notwithstanding the delay, finally overhauling and capturing the chase.

When war was declared with England, the "Constellation" was so thoroughly dismantled, that some months were occupied in refitting before she was ready to put to sea. In January, 1813, she dropped anchor in Hampton Roads, expecting to set out on an extended cruise the next morning. Had she been a day earlier, her career in the War of 1812 might have added new lustre to her glorious record in the war with France; but the lack of that day condemned her to inglorious inactivity throughout the war: for on that very night a British squadron of line-of-battle ships and frigates dropped anchor a few miles down the bay, and the "Constellation" was fairly trapped.

When, by the gray light of early morning, the lookout on the "Constellation" saw the British fleet lying quietly at their anchorage down the bay, he reported to Capt. Stewart; and the latter saw that, for a time, he must be content to remain in port. Stewart's reputation for bravery and devotion to his country leaves no doubt that the prospect of prolonged idleness was most distasteful to him. But he had little time to mourn over his disappointment. The position of the frigate was one of great danger. At any moment she might be exposed to attack by the hostile fleet. Accordingly, she dropped down abreast of Craney Island, where she was secure from attack by the British vessels, but still open to the assaults of their boats.

To meet this danger, Capt. Stewart took the most elaborate precautions. His ship was anchored in the middle of the narrow channel; and on either side were anchored seven gunboats, officered and manned by the men of the frigate. Around the gunboats and frigate extended a vast circle of floating logs, linked together by heavy chains, that no boarders might come alongside the vessels. The great frigate towered high above the surrounding gunboats, her black sides unbroken by an open port; for the gun-deck ports were lashed down, and the guns housed. Not a rope's end was permitted to hang over the side; the stern ladders were removed, and the gangway cleats knocked off. An enemy might as well hope to scale the unbroken front of a massive wall of masonry, as that dark, forbidding hull. From the bulwarks rose on all sides, to the ends of the yards, a huge net made of ratlin stuff, boiled in pitch until it would turn the edge of a cutlass, and further strengthened by nail-rods and small chains. The upper part of the netting was weighted with kentledge, the pigs of iron used for ballast; so that, should the hardy assailants succeed in coming alongside and scaling the side, a few blows of an axe would let fall the heavily weighted nettings, sweeping the boarders into the sea, and covering boats and men with an impenetrable mesh, under which they would be at the mercy of the sailors on the frigate's decks. The carronades and howitzers were loaded with grape; and the officers and men felt that only bravery on their part was essential to the defeat of any force that Great Britain could send against the ship.

Heedless of these formidable preparations for their reception, the enemy set under way two expeditions for the capture of the "Constellation." In neither case did the antagonists actually come to blows, for the approach of the British was discovered before they came within pistol-shot; and, as their only chance lay in surprising the Americans, they retired without striking a blow. The coming of the first expedition was known upon the "Constellation" the day before it actually set out. A Portuguese merchantman, trying to beat out of the bay, had been stopped by the British, and anchored a few miles below the American frigate. A guard and lookout from the English fleet were stationed on the Portuguese to watch the "Constellation." In an unguarded moment, these men let fall a hint of the movement under way; and an American passenger on the Portuguese vessel quickly carried the news

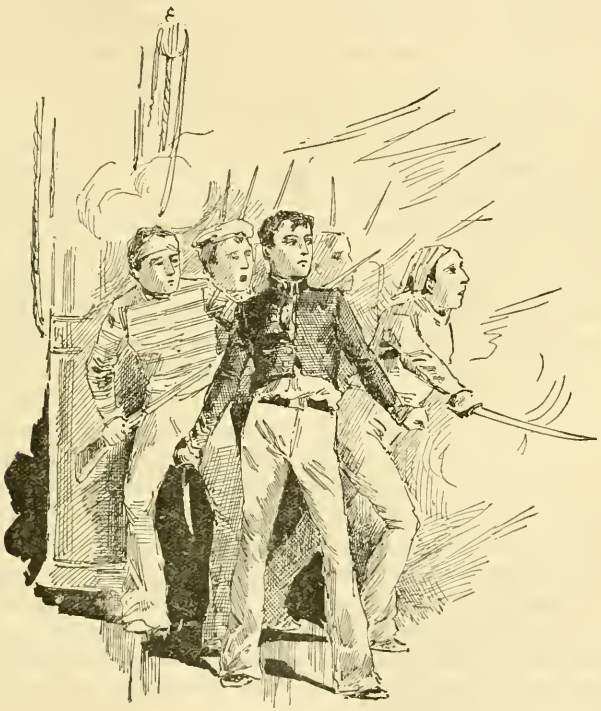
to Capt. Stewart, and volunteered to remain and aid in the defence. The next night was dark and drizzly; and the British, to the number of two thousand, set out in boats for the "Constellation." Hardly were they within gun-shot, when two lanterns gleamed from the side of a watchful guard-boat; and the roll of drums and sound of hurrying feet aboard the frigate told that the alarm was given. The assailants thereupon abandoned the adventure, and returned to their ship. The next night they returned, but again retreated discomfited. Several nights later, a third expedition came up. This time the guard-boat was far down the bay; and, seeing the huge procession of boats, the Americans calmly edged in among them, and for some time rowed along, listening to the conversation of the British, who never dreamed that an enemy could be in their midst. Suddenly a sailor, more sharp-eyed than the rest, caught sight of the interlopers; and the cry was raised, "A stranger!" The Americans tugged at their oars, and were soon lost to sight; but, not being pursued, returned, and accompanied their foes up the bay, and even anchored with the flotilla at a point above the "Constellation." The enemy, finding the Americans constantly on the watch, abandoned their designs on the ship, and vowed that Capt. Stewart must be a Scotchman, as he could never be caught napping. Some days later, an officer, sent with a flag of truce to the British fleet, vastly chagrined the officers there by repeating their remarks overheard by the guard-boat officers who joined the British flotilla in the dark. These three escapes confirmed the reputation borne by the "Constellation," as a "lucky ship;" and although she remained pent up in port throughout the war, doing nothing for her country, her luck was unquestioned in the minds of the sailors. With her they classed the "Constitution" and "Enterprise," while the "Chesapeake" and "President" were branded as unlucky. Certainly the career of these ships in the War of 1812 went far to confirm the superstitious belief of the sailors.

In the course of the next two months, Chesapeake Bay was the scene of two gallant adventures, in which American privateersmen were opposed to the British sailors. On Feb. 8, the privateer schooner "Lottery" was standing down the bay under easy sail, out-bound on a voyage to Bombay. The schooner was one of the clipper-built craft, for which Baltimore ship-builders were famous the world over. Her battery con-

sisted of six twelve-pounder carronades, and her crew numbered twenty-five men. Near the point at which the noble bay opens into the Atlantic ocean, a narrow sheet of water extends into the Virginia shore, winding in sinuous courses several miles inland. This is known as Lynnhaven Bay; and on its placid surface there lay, on the morning of the "Lottery's" appearance, four powerful frigates flying the British flag. From their tops the approaching schooner could be seen across the low-lying neck of land that separated the smaller bay from the main body of water. The cry of "Sail, ho!" roused the fleet to sudden activity; and an expedition of two hundred men was quickly organized to proceed against the privateer. Fortune seemed to favor the British; for hardly had the boats left the fleet, when the fresh breeze died away, and the schooner was left at the mercy of the boats, which, propelled by the long, swinging strokes of man-o'-war oarsmen, bore down rapidly upon her. Capt. Southcomb of the "Lottery" was an American sailor, who had smelt powder before; and he had no idea of yielding up his ship without a struggle. The formidable force sent against him merely moved him to more desperate resistance. When the boats came within range, the guns of the "Lottery" opened upon them with a hail of grape and round shot. Still the assailants pressed on, and soon came beneath the schooner's lee. Dropping their oars, the plucky British tars sprang into the chains, swarmed up the bobstay and over the bow, and used each other's backs as ladders to aid them to reach the schooner's deck. The little crew of privateersmen fought viciously, guarding the side with cutlasses and pistols, hurling the boarders back into the sea, or cutting them down as they reached the deck. Cold shot and kentledge were dashed upon the boats, in the hopes of sinking them; while the carronades poured a destructive fire upon such boats as could be reached by their shot. But the conflict was too unequal to last long. The English sailors swarmed over the gunwale on all sides, and, cheering lustily, drove the small remnant of defenders below. Capt. Southcomb was cut down, and lay mortally wounded upon the deck when the enemy took possession of the ship. When the victors came to look about the captured vessel, they found such proofs of a desperate resistance, that their admiration was open and pronounced. Five only of the schooner's crew were unhurt, while the British paid for their success with the loss of thirteen men.

Capt. Southcomb, in a dying condition, was taken aboard the frigate "Belvidera," where he received the tenderest treatment, and was shown marked respect on account of his bravery.

In the next encounter between the blockaders and a privateer, the



AWAITING THE BOARDERS.

British bore away the palm for gallantry. This time the privateersmen had every advantage, while the British carried the day by pure courage. The captured vessels were the privateer schooner "Dolphin," of twelve guns, and the letters-of-marque "Racer," "Arab," and "Lynx," of six guns each. The crews of the four vessels aggregated one hundred and

sixty men. Against this force came five boats manned by one hundred and five British sailors, who pulled fifteen miles in order to attack their foes. Wearied though they were by the long pull, the sight of the privateers seemed to arouse new strength in the plucky tars; and, without a thought of the odds against them, they dashed forward, cheering, and calling upon the Americans to surrender. Had the four schooners been manned by such brave men as those who defended the "Lottery," the assailants might have been beaten off. As it was, two vessels surrendered without firing a shot. The crew of the "Racer" fought pluckily for a time, but were soon overpowered, and the vessel's guns turned upon the "Dolphin." When fire was opened upon this last vessel, her crew, affrighted, leaped overboard from every side; and the "Dolphin" was soon in the hands of her enemies, who had lost but thirteen men in the whole action.

Many a gallant adventure, such as this, is to be laid to the credit of the British tars on the American station during the continuance of the blockade. Right dashing fellows were they, at cutting out a coasting-schooner as she lay under the guns of some American earthworks. The lads that have won for England her supremacy upon the seas have never been behindhand at swarming up the sides of an enemy, leaping his taffrail, and meeting him on his own deck with the cold steel. And as the year rolled on, and the blockade along the American coast was made more strict, the meetings between the enemies became more frequent. From every seaport town, Yankee privateers were waiting to escape to sea; and they seldom won clear without a brush with the watchful enemy. The British, too, had begun to fit out privateers, though American commerce offered but little enticement for these mercenary gentry. Between the ships of the two private armed navies, encounters were common; and the battles were often fought with courage and seamanship worthy of the regular navy.

Little glory was won by the navy of the United States during the opening months of the year. Many ships were laid up in port; while some, like the "Constellation," were blockaded by the enemy. The "President" and the "Congress" managed to get to sea from Boston in April, and entered upon a protracted cruise, in which the bad luck of the former ship seemed to pursue her with malevolent persistence. The

two ships parted after cruising in company for a month, and scoured the ocean until the following December, when they returned home, experiencing little but continual disappointments. The "Congress" could report only the capture of four British merchantmen, as the result of her eight months' cruise; while the long service had so seriously injured her hull, that she was condemned as unseaworthy, and ended her career, a dismantled hulk reduced to the ignoble service of store-ship at a navy-yard.

The "President" was little more fortunate in her search for prizes. After parting with her consort, she beat about in the vicinity of the Gulf Stream, in the hopes of getting a ship or two returning from the West Indies. But day after day passed, and no ship appeared. Changing his plan, Commodore Rodgers made for the North Sea, feeling sure that there he would find in plenty the marine game for which he was seeking. But, to his astonishment, not an English ship was to be found. It was then the middle of summer, and the frigate had been at sea for nearly three months. The jackies on the forecastle were weary of the long voyage, and fairly at the end of their occupations for "teasing time." The officers, well knowing the effect of long idleness upon the sailors, were tireless in devising means of employment. The rigging was set up weekly, so that the shrouds and stays were like lines drawn with a ruler. Enough rope-yarn was pulled, and spun-yarn spun, to supply a navy-yard for months. Laggards were set to scrubbing the rust off the chain cables, and sharpening with files the flukes of the anchors. When such work failed, the men were drilled in the use of cutlasses and single sticks; forming long lines down the gun-deck, and slashing away with right good will at the word of the instructor. But the monotony of a long cruise without a prize cannot long be beguiled by such makeshifts; and it was with the heartiest pleasure that the sailors heard that the commodore had determined to put into port for a time, and take on board stores.

It was North Bergen, Norway, that Rodgers chose for this purpose; and an unfortunate choice it proved to be, for a famine prevailed in the country, and only water could be obtained for the ship. Leaving the inhospitable port, the "President" was soon again upon the ocean. She quickly took two British merchantmen, from which she replenished her

stores. Shortly after, two hostile frigates hove in sight, and the "President" fled for her life before them for more than eighty hours. At that season, in those high latitudes, no friendly darkness settled over the ocean to give the fugitive a chance to escape. Bright daylight persisted throughout the chase, and the sun never dipped below the horizon. Sheer good sailing saved the American frigate, and enabled her to leave her pursuers far in her wake.

For some days thereafter, better luck seemed to attend the frigate that so pluckily kept up her operations in seas thousands of miles from a friendly port. With true Yankee audacity, she extended her cruise even into the Irish Channel, and there preyed upon British commerce until the enemy was moved to send a squadron to rout out the audacious intruder. Then Rodgers set sail for home.

On the voyage to the United States, the "President" captured a British armed schooner by a stratagem which taught at least one British officer to respect "Yankee cuteness."

It was near the last of September that the frigate was flying along before a fresh breeze. Her yards were spread with a cloud of snowy canvas, and the wind sung through the straining cordage a melody sweet to the ears of the sailor homeward bound. Towards evening, a small sail was made out in the distance; and, as time wore on, it was seen that she was rapidly approaching the "President." Rodgers surmised that the stranger might be a British vessel, and determined to lure her within range by strategy. In some way he had obtained knowledge of some of the private signals of the British navy; and in a few minutes from the masthead of the American frigate, there fluttered a row of flags which announced her as the British frigate "Sea-Horse." The stranger promptly responded, and was made out to be the schooner "Highflyer," a little craft noted for her sailing qualities. Unsuspectingly the "Highflyer" came under the stern of the American frigate, and waited for a boat to be sent aboard. Soon the boat came; and one of Rodgers's lieutenants, clad in British uniform, clambered up the side, and was received with due honor. He was the bearer of a message from Commodore Rodgers, requesting that the signal-books of the "Highflyer" be sent on board the fictitious "Sea-Horse" for comparison and revision. This the British captain hastened to do, and soon followed his books to the deck

of the frigate, where a lieutenant met him, clothed in full British uniform. A file of marines, dressed in the scarlet coats of the British service, stood on the deck; and the duped Englishman greatly admired the appearance of the frigate, remarking to the officer who escorted him to Rodgers's cabin, that so trim a craft could only be found in His Majesty's service.

On entering the cabin, the English officer greeted Commodore Rodgers with deference, and proceeded at once to tell of naval matters.

"I have here," said he, placing a bundle of papers in the commodore's hands, "a numbers of despatches for Admiral Warren, who is on this station. You may not know that one of the principal objects of our squadron cruising here is the capture of the Yankee frigate 'President,' which has been greatly annoying British commerce."

Rodgers was naturally much interested in this statement, and asked the visitor if he knew much about the commander of the "President."

"I hear he is an odd fish," was the response; "and certainly he is devilish hard to catch."

Rodgers started. He had hardly expected so frank an expression of opinion.

"Sir," said he emphatically, "do you know what vessel you are on board of?"

"Why, certainly, — on board of His Majesty's ship 'Sea-Horse.'"

"No, sir, you are mistaken," was the startling response. "You are on board of the United States frigate 'President,' and I am Commodore Rodgers."

The astounded Englishman sprang to his feet, and rushed to the deck. The sight he saw there was still more startling. The quarter-deck was crowded with officers in United States uniform. The scarlet coats of the marines had vanished, and were replaced by Yankee blue. Even as he looked, the British flag came fluttering down, the American ensign went up, and the band struck up "Yankee Doodle."

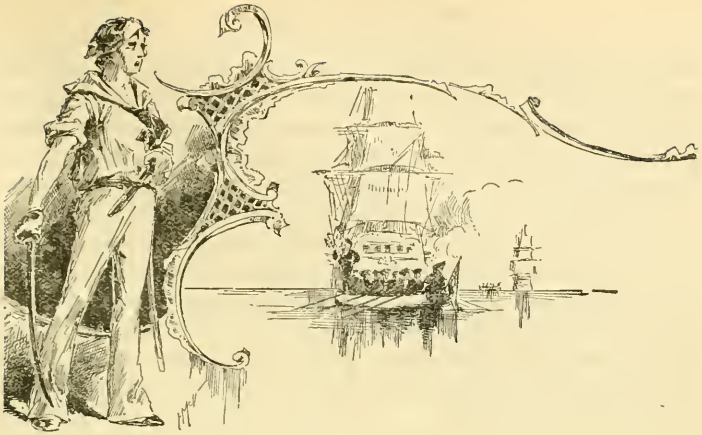
Nothing was left to the Englishman but to submit; and, with the best grace possible, he surrendered his vessel and himself to the "odd fish," who had so cleverly trapped him.

Three days later, the "President," with her prize, and crowded with prisoners, dropped anchor in the harbor of Newport, after a cruise of

one hundred and forty-eight days. In actual results, the cruise was far from satisfactory, for but eleven vessels had been taken. But the service rendered the country by annoying the enemy's merchantmen, and draw-

"I AM COMMODORE RODGERS."

ing the British war-vessels away in chase, was vast. At one time more than twenty British men-of-war were searching for the roving American frigate; and the seafaring people of the United States were thus greatly benefited by the "President's" prolonged cruise.



## CHAPTER IX.

DECATUR BLOCKADED AT NEW YORK. — ATTEMPTS TO ESCAPE THROUGH LONG ISLAND SOUND. — THE FLAG-SHIP STRUCK BY LIGHTNING. — TORPEDOES. — FULTON'S STEAM FRIGATE. — ACTION BETWEEN THE "CHESAPEAKE" AND "SHANNON."

WHILE the "President" was thus roaming the seas, almost within sight of the shores of the British Isles, events were occurring along the American coast which were little likely to raise the spirits of the people of the United States. From the "President," the "Congress," the "Essex," and the smaller vessels that were upholding the honor of the flag upon the ocean, they could hear nothing. But worse than this was it for the good people of New York or Boston to go down to the water-side and see stanch United States frigates kept in port by the overwhelming forces of the enemy, that lay watchfully outside the harbor's mouth.

For there was no doubt about it: the blockade was daily becoming closer; and in the months of April and May a ship would have found it a hard task to run out of New York Harbor without falling into the hands of the British fleet stationed there. But, at that very time, three stout men-of-war floated on the waves of that noble bay, under the com-

mand of an officer little used to staying quietly in port in time of war. The officer was Stephen Decatur: and the ships were the flag-ship "United States;" the captured "Macedonian," repaired, and flying the stars and stripes, under the command of the gallant Capt. Jacob Jones; and the sloop-of-war "Hornet," Capt. Biddle.

With this force under his command, Decatur burned with the desire to get to sea. The watchfulness of the British at the Narrows made it useless to think of escaping that way: therefore, he determined to pass up the sound, and reach the ocean by way of the opening between Montauk Point and Block Island. At the very outset of this voyage, however, was a serious obstacle. Through the narrow channel of the East River, between Ward's Island and the Long Island shore, the tides rushed with a mad speed and turbulence, that had won for the strait the significant name of Hell Gate. The United States Government had not then bent its energies to undermining and blowing into bits the jagged rocks that at low tide reared their crests above the swirling eddies. With its tides like mill races, and rocks hidden beneath the treacherous water, Hell Gate was a fearful place for any ship to make its way through with the uncertain aid of sails alone. Still greater were its dangers for the ponderous and deep-laden men-of-war, that required deep water and plenty of sea-room for their movements. Such considerations, however, had no weight with Decatur, who had seen his ships lying idly at their anchorage off Staten Island long enough. In the night of May 24, he accordingly got up anchors and started for the sound.

Hell Gate was passed safely, thanks to a skilful pilot, whom neither the darkness of the night, nor the perils of the narrow channel, could daunt. Once past this danger, the three vessels made their way up the sound, with the flag-ship leading. They had gone but a little way when black clouds to the westward told of a coming storm. The cloud-bank came rolling up rapidly; and soon, with a burst of rain, the three vessels were enveloped in the thunder-shower. The lightning flashed through the black clouds, the thunder crashed and roared, and the wind shrieked fiercely through the cordage. The "United States" held her place at the head of the squadron; while behind, at the distance of half a cable's-length, came the "Macedonian." Suddenly the men on the deck of the

latter vessel were horrified to see a jagged flash of lightning cut its zigzag course through the clouds, then dart, straight as an arrow, at the main-mast of the "United States." Hoarse cries were heard from the deck of the stricken frigate; and the captain of the "Macedonian," fearing lest the "States" should blow up, threw all aback on his ship, to escape the explosion. But happily the thunderbolt had done little serious injury. In its course it had cut away the pendant; shot into the doctor's cabin, extinguishing that worthy's candle, to his vast astonishment; then, gliding away, broke through the ship's hull near the water-line, and plunged into the sea, after ripping off a few sheets of copper from the ship's bottom. No delay was caused by the accident; though the superstitious sailors pronounced it an evil omen, and dismally predicted all sorts of disasters.

On the 29th of May the squadron reached the strait through which Decatur hoped to gain the ocean; but, to the intense disappointment of all on board, a formidable British fleet barred all egress. Three days later the Americans made an attempt to slip out unseen; but, failing in this, they returned to New London harbor, where the two frigates were kept rotting in the mud until the war was ended. The "Hornet" luckily managed to run the blockade, and of her exploits we shall hear later.

Upon the arrival of the three American ships at New London, the enemy guarded the coast with renewed vigilance. The inhabitants made every attempt to drive away the blockaders; and in the course of this prolonged struggle there appeared, for almost the first time in the history of warfare, that most terrible of offensive weapons, the submarine torpedo.

During the Revolution, two attempts had been made to blow up British men-of-war by means of torpedoes, invented by a Saybrook mechanic named Bushnell. Though the attempts failed, yet the torpedoes demonstrated their tremendous power. Before the declaration of the second war with England, Robert Fulton, the inventor of the steamboat, had made many improvements upon Bushnell's designs, and had so thoroughly spread the knowledge of torpedo warfare that it suggested itself to many New Englanders as a means of driving the enemy from their coast.

The first attempt was well planned, but failed through an entirely accidental combination of circumstances. Certain private citizens (for in that day it was thought ignoble for a government to embark in torpedo

warfare) fitted out in New York a schooner, the "Eagle," in the hold of which ten kegs of powder, together with sulphur and piles of heavy stones, were placed. In the head of one of the casks were two gun-locks, primed, and held in place by two barrels of flour. Should either of the barrels be moved, the lock would spring, and the terrible mine would explode with tremendous force. With this dreadful engine of destruction, carefully covered by a cargo of flour and naval stores, the "Eagle" left New York, and made her way up the bay, until, near New London, she was overhauled and captured by the British frigate "Ramillies." Boats were sent out by the English to take possession of the prize; but the crew of the "Eagle," seeing the enemy coming, took to their small boats, and succeeded in safely reaching the shore. The captors, on boarding the vessel, were vastly pleased to find that its cargo consisted largely of flour, of which the "Ramillies" stood in great need. They at once attempted to get the frigate alongside the prize, that the captured cargo might be readily transferred. But a calm had fallen, and two hours' constant work with sweeps and towing was unavailing. Accordingly, this plan of action was abandoned, and the boats were ordered to lighter the cargo from the "Eagle" to the frigate. Hardly had the first barrel been moved, when, with a roar, and rush of flame and smoke as from a volcano, the schooner blew up. Huge timbers, stones, and barrels were sent flying high into the air. The lieutenant and ten men from the frigate, who were on the "Eagle" at the time, were blown to atoms; and the timbers and missiles, falling on all sides, seriously injured many men in the boats near by. Had the frigate been alongside, where her commander had endeavored to place her, she would have gone to the bottom, with all her crew.

An attempt so nearly successful as this could not be long in leading others to make similar ventures. Sir Thomas Hardy, the commander of the "Ramillies," was kept in a constant fever of apprehension, lest some night his ship should be suddenly sent to the bottom by one of the insidious torpedoes. Several times the ship was attacked; and her escapes were so purely matters of accident, that she seemed almost to be under the protection of some sailors' deity. A Norwich mechanic, who had invented a submarine boat with a speed of three miles an hour, succeeded in getting under the bottom of the blockader three times, but

was each time foiled in his attempt to attach a torpedo to the ship's hull. Another American, a fisherman, succeeded in getting alongside in a whale-boat, unobserved, but was driven away before he could get his torpedo in position. Such constant attacks so alarmed Hardy, that at last he gave up bringing his ship to anchor, keeping her continually under way, and, as a further precaution, causing her bottom to be swept every two hours throughout the day and night.

The use of torpedoes was not confined to the people of New England. New York Harbor was closed with a row of them. The British seventy-four "Plantagenet," lying off Cape Henry, Virginia, was nearly sunk by one in the charge of Mr. Mix, an American naval officer. The attack was made near ten o'clock, on an unusually dark night. Mix and his associates pulled in a heavy boat to a point near the bow of the menaced vessel. The torpedo was then slipped into the water, with the clock-work which was to discharge it set in motion. The rushing tide carried the destructive engine down toward the frigate; and the Americans pulled away into the darkness, to await the explosion. But the clockwork had been badly adjusted, and the torpedo exploded just before it reached the ship. A huge column of water, gleaming with a ghostly sulphurous light, was thrown high in the air, falling with terrific force on the deck of the frigate, which was almost capsized by the shock.

A veritable storm of abuse and condemnation followed the introduction of torpedo warfare. All countries and all peoples pronounced it treacherous and cowardly, and the English press was particularly loud in its denunciations. Yet the torpedo had won its place in the armaments of nations; and to-day we see all the nations of Europe vieing with each other in the invention and construction of powerful and accurate torpedoes and swift torpedo-boats.

The germ of another feature of modern naval organization is to be found in the annals of the War of 1812. The first war-vessel propelled by steam was launched by the Americans for service in this war. She was designed by Robert Fulton, and bore the name of "Fulton the First." In model she was a queer craft, with two hulls like a catamaran, with the single propelling-wheel mounted between them amidships. Her armament was to consist of thirty thirty-two-pounder guns, and two one-hundred-pounder columbiads. A secondary engine was designed to throw

floods of water upon the decks and through the port-holes of an enemy. While the vessel was building, reports concerning her reached England; and soon the most ludicrously exaggerated accounts of her power were current in that country. "She mounts forty-four guns,' said an English paper, "four of which are one-hundred-pounders, mounted in bomb-proofs, and defended by thousands of boarding-pikes and cutlasses wielded by steam; while showers of boiling water are poured over those boarders who might escape death from the rapidly whirling steel." Unfortunately for the American cause, this much dreaded vessel did not get into the water in time to take any active part in the war.

In June, 1813, while the British blockaders in the Sound were exercising all their ingenuity to keep of the torpedoes, there was fought off the Massachusetts coast, near Boston, an engagement which must go down to history as one of the most brilliant naval duels of the age of sails. The United States frigate "Chesapeake" was refitting at Boston, after a cruise of four months, during which she had more than justified her reputation as an unlucky ship. Though she sailed the waters most frequented by British merchantmen, she returned to port having captured only four vessels. Three men-of-war were sighted, but could not be spoken. Strangely enough, the frigate sailed over the spot where lay the sunken "Peacock" the very day after the "Hornet" had fought her famous fight. Ill-luck pursued the hapless ship even to her home port; for, as she was entering the port of Boston, a sudden squall carried away the topmast, with several men who were aloft at the time.

When the "Hornet" reached port, after her victory over the "Peacock," her gallant captain, James Lawrence, was appointed to the command of the "Chesapeake." On reaching his ship, he found affairs in a desperate condition. The sailors who had sailed on the long and unproductive cruise were firmly convinced that the frigate's bad luck was beyond remedy. The term of enlistment of many had expired, and they were daily leaving the ship. Those who remained were sullen, and smarting under fancied ill-treatment in the matter of the prize-money. To get fresh seamen was no easy task. Great fleets of privateers were being fitted out; and sailors generally preferred to sail in these vessels, in which the discipline was light, and the gains usually great. Some sailors from the "Constitution" were induced to join the "Chesapeake;" and

these, with the remnant of the frigate's old crew, formed the nucleus of a crew which was filled up with merchant-sailors and foreigners of all nations. Before the lists were fairly filled, the ship put to sea, to give battle to an adversary that proved to be her superior.

The events leading to the action were simple, and succeeded each other hurriedly. The port of Boston was blockaded by two British frigates, the "Tenedos" thirty-eight, and the "Shannon" thirty-eight. The latter vessel was under the command of Capt. Philip Bowes Vere Broke, a naval officer of courage, skill, and judgment. His crew was thoroughly disciplined, and his ship a model of efficiency. No officer in the service understood better than he the difference between the discipline of a martinet and the discipline of a prudent and sagacious commander. His ship might not, like the "Peacock," merit the title of "the yacht;" but for active service she was always prepared. James, an English naval historian, turns from his usual occupation of explaining the American naval victories by belittling the British ships, and enormously magnifying the power of the victors, to speak as follows of the "Shannon:" —

"From the day on which he [Capt. Broke] joined her, the 14th of September, 1806, the 'Shannon' began to feel the effect of her captain's proficiency as a gunner, and zeal for the service. The laying of the ship's ordnance so that it may be correctly fired in a horizontal direction is justly deemed a most important operation, as upon it depends, in a great measure, the true aim and destructive effect of the shot; this was attended to by Capt. Broke in person. By drafts from other ships, and the usual means to which a British man-of-war is obliged to resort, the 'Shannon' got together a crew; and in the course of a year or two, by the paternal care and excellent regulations of Capt. Broke, the ship's company became as pleasant to command as it was dangerous to meet." Moreover, the historian goes on to relate that the ship's guns were carefully sighted, and her ammunition frequently overhauled. Often a cask would be thrown overboard, and a gun's crew suddenly called to sink it as it bobbed about on the waves astern. Practice with the great guns was of daily occurrence. "Every day for about an hour and a half in the forenoon, when not prevented by chase or the state of the weather, the men were exercised at training the guns; and for the same

time in the afternoon in the use of the broad-sword, musket, pike, etc. Twice a week the crew fired at targets, both with great guns and musketry; and Capt. Broke, as an additional stimulus beyond the emulation excited, gave a pound of tobacco to every man that put a shot through the bull's-eye."

Such was the vessel that in June appeared alone off the entrance to Boston Harbor, and by her actions seemed to challenge the "Chesapeake" to give her battle. Indeed, Broke's wish to test the strength of the two vessels was so great, that he sent in, by the hands of an American prisoner, a written challenge, the terms and spirit of which showed the writer to be a courageous and chivalric officer and gentleman. "As the 'Chesapeake' now appears ready for sea," he wrote, "I request you will do me the honor to meet the 'Shannon' with her, ship to ship, to try the fortunes of our respective flags. To an officer of your character, it requires some apology for proceeding to further particulars. Be assured, sir, it is not from any doubt I can entertain of your wishing to close with my proposal, but merely to provide an answer to any objection which might be made, and very reasonably, upon the chance of our receiving any unfair support." Capt. Broke then proceeds to assure Lawrence that the other British ships in the neighborhood would be sent away before the day of combat. To the challenge was appended a careful statement of the strength of the "Shannon," that Lawrence might understand that the ships were fairly matched.

But before this challenge reached Boston, Lawrence had set out to seek the enemy. He had seen the "Shannon" lying off the entrance to the port; and, finding out that she was alone, he knew that her presence was in itself a challenge that he could not honorably ignore. Nor did he desire to avoid the battle thus offered. He had confidence in his crew, his frigate, and himself, and looked for nothing but victory. To the Secretary of the Navy, he wrote, "An English frigate is now in sight from my deck. I have sent a pilot-boat out to reconnoitre; and, should she be alone, I am in hopes to give a good account of her before night. My crew appear to be in fine spirits, and I hope will do their duty."

In truth, however, the condition of this same crew was such that the captain would have been justified in refusing the challenge. An unusual

number of foreign sailors were enrolled, among whom was a Portuguese, who, in the ensuing battle, did incalculable injury to the cause of the "Chesapeake." The crew had never drilled together; many of the sailors came on board only a few hours before the ship sailed out to battle. All the old sailors were sullen over the delay in the payment of the prize-money of their last cruise. Lawrence attempted to allay their discontent by giving them checks for the prize-money; but the sense of injury still lingered in the minds of the men, and they were ill-fitted to do battle for the honor of the flag. Added to this evil was the fact that the first and second lieutenants and two acting lieutenants were away on sick-leave, and the ship was thus left short of officers on the eve of battle.

Regardless of the disadvantages under which he labored, Lawrence weighed anchor on the 1st of June, and started down the harbor. As he approached the ocean, Lawrence mustered his crew aft, and eloquently urged them to fight bravely, and do their duty to the country, which had entered upon this war in defence of seamen and their rights. Three ensigns were run up; and at the fore was unfurled a broad white flag, bearing the motto, "FREE TRADE AND SAILORS' RIGHTS." When Lawrence closed his speech, and pointed out the flag floating at the fore, the men cheered and went forward, leaving the captain convinced that he could depend upon their loyalty.

The morning was bright and cool, with a fresh breeze blowing, before which the "Chesapeake" rapidly bore down upon the foe that awaited her. Following cautiously in her track came a number of small craft, — pilot-boats, sloops, fishing-smacks, and pleasure-boats, — that had come down the bay to see the outcome of the battle. Hundreds of people of Boston rode along the coast, in hopes of gaining an outlook from which the progress of the fight might be viewed.

At noon the ship rounded Boston Light, and made out into the open sea. The "Shannon" went ahead, under easy sail, making up the coast toward Salem. Towards five o'clock the "Chesapeake" luffed up for a moment; while the pilot clambered down the side, and put off in a small boat. A gun was then fired, as a signal that the Americans were ready for action.

The "Shannon" evidently understood the purport of the signal; for

she quickly hove to, and troops of agile jackies clambered up her rigging, and began to take in sail. The "Chesapeake" followed suit, and was soon under only top-sails and jib. She then laid her course straight for the enemy.

A ship preparing for action in that day was a scene of hurry and confusion that cannot be equalled in this era of machinery and few guns. At the short, broken, rolling beat of the drums, calling the men to quarters, the hurried rush of hundreds of feet began, as the men came pouring from all parts of the ship to their posts. Some clambered aloft to their stations in the tops; others invaded the sanctity of the quarter-deck and captain's cabin, where several guns are always mounted. But the most stirring scene is on the long gun-deck where the men gradually fall into their places at the two long rows of great guns that peer through the open ports on either side. All are stripped to the waist; and at many a gun the fair skin of the American sailor gleams white by the side of some swarthy Spaniard, or still darker negro.

BEATING TO QUARTERS.

All quiet down on reaching their stations; and, five minutes after the drum-beats, no sound is heard, save perhaps the steps of the black boys,

taking rations of grog around, that the men may "splice the main brace" before going into the fight.

Thus silently did the "Chesapeake" bear down upon her adversary. There was no long-range firing; for the two commanders were veterans, whose chief desire was to settle the dispute yard-arm to yard-arm. Gradually the American ship ranged alongside the "Shannon," at a distance of half pistol-shot; and, as her fore-mast came in a line with the "Shannon's" mizzen-mast, the latter opened fire with her cabin-guns. For a moment the "Chesapeake" was silent, waiting for her guns to bear; then, with sulphuric flashes and a thunderous roar, she let fly her whole broadside. Then followed a duel with great guns. The two ships, lying side by side, dealt and received staggering blows. The spectators in small boats, who kept a safe distance, and the crowds of eager watchers on the far-off heights of Salem, saw through their spy-glasses the flash of the first broadsides, and the flying splinters that followed the course of the deadly shot. Then a heavy cloud of yellow smoke settled over the warring leviathans, and all further incidents of the battle were shut out from view. Only the top-masts of the ships, with the half-furled sails and the opposing ensigns flying, could be seen above the smoke.

Under this vaporous pall, the fighting was sharp and desperate. The first broadside of the "Shannon" so swept the decks of the American frigate, that, of one hundred and fifty men quartered on the upper deck, not fifty were upon their legs when the terrible rush of the shot was over. The sailors in the tops of the British frigate, looking down upon the decks of their enemy, could see nothing but a cloud of hammocks, splinters, and wreckage of all kinds, driven fiercely across the deck. Both men at the wheel fell dead, but their places were soon filled; while fresh gunners rushed down to work the guns that had been silenced by the enemy's fearful broadside. In a moment the "Chesapeake" responded with spirit, and for some time broadsides were exchanged with inconceivable rapidity. The men encouraged each other with cheers and friendly cries. They had named the guns of the frigate, and with each telling shot they cheered the iron-throated monster which had hurled the bolt. "Wilful Murder," "Spitfire," "Revenge," "Bull Dog," "Mad Anthony," "Defiance," "Raging Eagle," and "Viper" were some of the titles born by the great guns; and well the weapons bore out the names thus bestowed upon them. The gunnery of the Americans was good, their

shot doing much damage to the enemy's rigging. But the effect of the "Shannon's" broadsides was such that no men, however brave, could stand before them. They swept the decks, mowing down brave fellows by the score. Officers fell on every side. At a critical moment the two ships fouled, exposing the "Chesapeake" to a raking broadside, which beat in her stern-ports, and drove the gunners from the after-port. At this moment, Lawrence was wounded in the leg, but remained at his post and ordered that the boarders be called up. Unhappily a negro bugler had been detailed for the duty usually performed by drummers; and, at this important moment, he could not be found. Midshipmen and lieutenants ran about the ship, striving to call up the boarders by word of mouth. In the confusion, the bugler was found skulking under the stem of the launch, and so paralyzed by fear that he could only give a feeble blast upon his instrument. In the din and confusion of battle, the oral orders of the officers only perplexed the men; and the moment for boarding was lost. At that very moment, the turning-point of the conflict, Capt. Lawrence was struck by a musket-ball, and fell mortally wounded to the deck. His officers rushed to his side, and, raising him gently, were carrying him below, when in a firm voice he cried, —

"Tell the men to fire faster, and not give up the ship. Fight her till she sinks."

With these words on his lips, he was carried to the ward-room.

At this moment, the upper deck was left without an officer above the rank of midshipman. The men, seeing their captain carried below, fell into a panic, which was increased by the explosion of an arm-chest, into which a hand-grenade, hurled by a sailor lying out on the yard-arm of the "Shannon," had fallen. Seeing that the fire of the Americans had slackened, Capt. Broke left his quarter-deck, and, running hastily forward, gained a position on the bow of his ship from which he could look down upon the decks of the "Chesapeake." His practised eye quickly perceived the confusion on the deck of the American frigate; and he instantly ordered that the ships be lashed together, and the boarders called up. An old quartermaster, a veteran in the British navy, set about lashing the ships together, and accomplished his task, although his right arm was actually hacked off by the cutlass of an American sailor. The boarders were slow in coming up, and but twenty men fol-

lowed Broke as he climbed to the deck of the "Chesapeake." Broke led his men straight for the quarter-deck of the frigate. The Americans offered but little resistance. Not an officer was in sight to guide the

ON BOARD THE "CHESAPEAKE."

men, and the newly enlisted sailors and foreigners fled like sheep before the advance of the boarders.

The British reached the quarter-deck with hardly the loss of a man. Here stood Mr. Livermore, the chaplain of the "Chesapeake," who had cruised long with Lawrence, and bitterly mourned the captain's fate. Determined to avenge the fallen captain, he fired a pistol at Broke's head, but missed him. Broke sprang forward, and dealt a mighty stroke of his keen cutlass at the chaplain's head, who saved himself by taking the blow on his arm. While the boarders were thus traversing the upper

deck, the sailors in the tops of the "Chesapeake" were keeping up a well-directed fire, before which many of the Englishmen fell. But this resistance was not of long duration; for one of the "Shannon's" long nines, loaded with grape, swept clean the "Chesapeake's" tops. With this, the British were in full control of the upper deck.

Up to this time, the Americans on the gun-deck had known nothing of the events occurring on the deck above them. When the news of the British assault spread, Lieut. Budd called upon the men to follow him, and drive the boarders back to their own ship. A number of the marines (who behaved splendidly throughout the fight) and some twenty veteran sailors were all that responded to the call. Broke had in the mean time summoned the marines of the "Shannon" to his aid; and the British, led by their dashing commander, were pouring in a dense column down the companion-ways to the gun-deck. Budd and his handful of followers attacked them fiercely; and, by the very desperation of the onset, the British were forced back a few paces. Broke threw himself upon the Americans. With his cutlass he cut down the first man who attacked him, and bore down upon the others, dealing deadly blows right and left. His followers came close behind him. The Americans fell on every side, and began to retreat before the overwhelming force of their foes. Up from the wardroom came Lieut. Ludlow, already suffering from two dangerous wounds. He placed himself beside the younger officer, and the two strove in every way to encourage their men But Ludlow soon fell, with a gaping wound across his forehead. Budd was cut down, and fell through the hatchway to the deck beneath. The sailors, seeing both officers fall, gave way in confusion; and the ship was in the hands of the British. A few marines kept up a fire through the hatchway, but soon were silenced.

An English officer, Lieut. Watts, ran to the halliards to haul down the American flag. But it would seem that the good genius which had watched over that starry banner throughout the war was loath to see it disgraced; for the officer had hardly finished his work, when a grape-shot from his own ship struck him, and he fell dead.

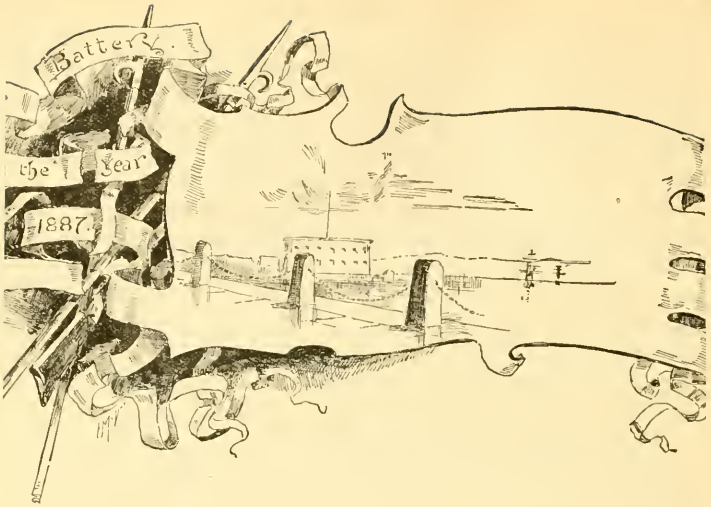
The noise of the battle had by this time died away, and the fresh breezes soon carried off the smoke that enveloped the combatants. It was an awful scene thus exposed to view. On the "Chesapeake" were sixty-one killed, and eighty-five wounded men. On the "Shannon" were

thirty-three dead, and fifty wounded. On a cot in the wardroom lay Capt. Lawrence, his mortal wound having mercifully rendered him unconscious, so that he knew nothing of the loss of his ship. Broke had been made delirious by the fevered throbbing of the wound he had so long neglected. Everywhere were evidences of carnage and desolation.

Little time was lost in getting the ships in order after the surrender. The noise of the hammer and saw was heard in every quarter. The wounded were taken to the sick-bay, and the bodies of the dead were committed to the ocean. Floods of water and the heavy holystones took from the decks the stains of blood. The galley cooks marched up and down the decks, sprinkling hot vinegar with a lavish hand. The British prize-crew took possession of the captured ship, and in a few hours the captor and captive were well on their way toward Halifax.

They reached port on the 7th of June; and the sight of the "Shannon," followed by the "Chesapeake" with the British ensign flying proudly over the stars and stripes, stirred the little city to the utmost enthusiasm. As the two ships pursued their stately course up the harbor, the British men-of-war on all sides manned their yards, and fired salutes in honor of the victory. The thunders of the cannon brought the town's-people to the water-side, and their cheers rang out lustily to welcome their conquering countrymen to port.

Capt. Lawrence had died the day before; and his body, wrapped in an American flag, lay on the quarter-deck of his frigate. Three days later, his body, with that of his gallant lieutenant Ludlow, was laid to rest with imposing naval honors, in the churchyard of Halifax. But his country, honoring him even in the day of his defeat, was not content that his body should lie in the soil of an enemy's country. Two months after the battle, an American vessel, the "Henry" of Salem, entered the harbor of Halifax, under cover of a flag of truce, and took on board the bodies of Lawrence and Ludlow. They were conveyed first to Salem and later to New York, where they now lie under a massive monument of sandstone, in a corner of Trinity churchyard. A few feet away, the ceaseless tide of human life rolls on its course up and down Broadway; few of the busy men and women pausing to remember that in the ancient churchyard lies the body of the man whose dying words, "Don't give up the ship," were for years the watchword and motto of the United States navy.




## CHAPTER X.

CRUISE OF THE "ESSEX."—A RICH PRIZE.—THE MYSTERIOUS LETTER.—CAPE HORN ROUNDED.—CAPTURE OF A PERUVIAN PRIVATEER.—AMONG THE BRITISH WHALERS.—PORTER IN COMMAND OF A SQUADRON.—A BOY COMMANDER.—THE SQUADRON LAYS UP AT NOOKAHEEVAH.

WHILE the events related in the two preceding chapters were occurring along the American coast, a few gallant vessels were upholding the honor of the stars and stripes in far distant lands. To cruise in waters frequented by an enemy's merchantmen, and capture, burn, sink, and destroy, is always a legitimate occupation for the navy of a belligerent nation. Yet the nation suffering at the hands of the cruisers invariably raises the cry of "wanton vandalism and cruelty," and brands the officers to whom falls so unpleasant a duty with the name of pirates. Such was the outcry raised against Paul Jones in the Revolutionary war; so it was the British described the brilliant service of the little brig "Argus" in 1813; and so the people of the North regarded the career of the "Alabama" and other Confederate cruisers in the great war for the Union. But perhaps no ship

had ever a more adventurous career, or wrought more damage to the enemy's commerce, than the United States frigate "Essex," under the command of the able officer David Porter.

Of the circumstances which led to the famous cruise of the "Essex," some account has already been given. With a full crew, and stores enough to enable her to keep the sea for some months, the ship set sail from the Delaware in the autumn of 1812, and headed to the southward with the intention of joining the "Constitution" and "Hornet" at some point in the tropics. Her first point of call was at Porto Praya, a harbor in the Cape Verd Islands. To the captain's disappointment, he could learn nothing of Bainbridge at this place; and he soon departed, after scrupulously exchanging salutes with a rickety little fort, over which floated the flag of Portugal. Continuing her southward way, the "Essex" crossed the equator, on which occasion the jolly tars enjoyed the usual ceremonies attendant upon crossing the line. Father Neptune and his faithful spouse, with their attendant suite, came aboard and superintended the operation of shaving and dowsing the green hands, whose voyages had never called them before into the Southern seas. Capt. Porter looked upon the frolic indulgently. He was well known as a captain who never unnecessarily repressed the light-heartedness of his crew. Two hours daily were set aside during which the crew were free to amuse themselves in any reasonable way. At four o'clock every afternoon, the shrill piping of the boatswain's whistle rang through the ship, followed by the cry, "D'ye hear there, fore and aft? All hands skylark!" No order ever brought a quicker response, and in a minute the decks became a perfect pandemonium. The sailors rushed here and there, clad in all sorts of clothes; boxed, fenced, wrestled; ran short foot-races; played at leap-frog, and generally comported themselves like children at play. Fights were of common occurrence; and the two combatants soon became the centre of an interested ring of spectators, who cheered on their favorites with loud cries of "Go it, Bill. Now, Jack, lively with yer left." But a sailor has no better friend to-day than the man he fought yesterday; and the fights, like the play, only kept the crew in good spirits and contentment.

The day after crossing the equator, the "Essex" sighted a sail and gave chase. Towards evening the frigate had gained greatly upon the stranger, and Porter displayed all the British signals which he had in his

possession. The chase made no response, but set a British ensign. By nine o'clock, the "Essex" was within musket-shot, and could easily have blown the fugitive out of water; but this Porter was loath to do, as he desired to take the brig without doing her any injury. However, as she showed no signs of surrendering, he ordered the marines to give her a volley of musketry. One man on the chase was killed, and a number wounded, upon which her flag was immediately hauled down. She proved to be the British packet "Nocton" of ten guns. In her hold was found fifty-five thousand dollars in specie, which was at once taken on board the "Essex;" and the "Nocton" was sent to the United States under the charge of a prize-crew. Before she could make a port, she fell in with a British man-of-war, and was captured after a few hours' chase.

Two days after parting with the "Nocton," the "Essex" hove in sight of the Island of Fernando Noronha, off the coast of Brazil. For a time the frigate abandoned her warlike character, battened down her ports, housed her guns, hid her large crew between decks, and sailed into the little harbor looking like a large but peaceable British merchantman. An officer clad in plain clothes went ashore, and, meeting the governor, stated that the ship was the "Fanny" of London, bound for Rio Janeiro. During the conversation, the governor remarked that His British Majesty's ships, the "Acosta" forty-four, and the "Morgiana" twenty, had but recently sailed from the port, and had left a letter for Sir James Yeo, requesting that it be forwarded to England as soon as possible. With this news, the lieutenant returned to the ship. On hearing his report, Porter at once surmised that the letter might have been left for him by Commodore Bainbridge; and he at once sent the officer back, bearing the message that the "Fanny" was soon going to London, and her captain would see the letter delivered to Sir James Yeo, in person. The unsuspecting governor accordingly delivered up the epistle, and it was soon in Porter's hands. The note read as follows:—

My Dear Mediterranean Friend, — Probably you may stop here. Don't attempt to water: it is attended with too many difficulties. I learned, before I left *England*, that you were bound to Brazil coast. If so, perhaps we may meet at St. Salvador or at Rio Janeiro. I should be happy to meet and converse on our old affairs of captivity. Recollect our secret in those times.

Your friend of His Majesty's ship "Acosta,"

Sir James Yeo of His British Majesty's ship "Southampton." KERR.

Porter read and pondered over this perplexing letter. He felt sure that the letter was from Bainbridge; and in the allusion to St. Salvador and Rio Janeiro, he perceived the commodore's wish for a rendezvous at one of those places. But what could be the secret of the times of captivity? Suddenly a thought struck him. Might there not be something written in sympathetic ink? Hurriedly calling for a candle, he held the letter above its flame, and saw, under the influence of the heat, words and sentences appearing where before all was blank paper.

"I am bound off St. Salvador," it read; "thence off Cape Frio, where I intend to cruise until the 1st of January. Go off Cape Frio to the northward of Rio, and keep a lookout for me."

That afternoon the governor of the island, looking out toward the harbor, was surprised to see the "Fanny" standing out under a full spread of canvas. Porter had gained all the information that he wished, and was off in search of his consorts. This search he continued until the 20th of January, cruising up and down off the Brazilian coast, and taking one or two small prizes. In this unprofitable service the ship's stores were being rapidly consumed. Among other things, the supply of rum began to run short; and in connection with this occurred a curious incident, that well illustrates the character of sailors. The daily rations of bread were reduced one-half, and the rations of salt meat one-third, without a word of remonstrance from the patient crew. Next the discovery was made that the rum was giving out, and a proportional reduction in the rations of grog was duly ordered. The jackies put in a vigorous and immediate protest. They were prepared, they said, to go without grog, should the supply of rum be unhappily exhausted; but so long as any of the precious fluid remained, their rations of grog should not be curtailed. But to this Porter would not accede, fearing that, should the men be altogether deprived of their grog, the health of the crew might suffer. Accordingly, when the crew were piped to "splice the main brace" the next day, they were told that half rations only would be issued; and, if the grog was not taken up in fifteen minutes, the tub would be overturned, and the rum spilled into the sea. So dire a threat was too much for the rebellious seamen: they sprang into line, with their tin cups, and drew their curtailed rations without more ado.

Some days after this occurrence, the "Essex" overhauled a Portuguese

vessel, from the captain of which Porter learned that an American frigate had shortly before fought and sunk an English frigate off the coast of Brazil; also, that it was rumored that an American corvette of twenty-two guns had been brought into Rio, a prize to a British seventy-four. This intelligence placed Capt. Porter in some perplexity. He felt convinced that the successful American frigate was the "Constitution;" a conjecture in which he was correct, for the news referred to the celebrated action of that ship with the "Java." The captured American corvette, he concluded, must be the "Hornet;" but herein the captain was wrong, for the "Hornet" was at that moment blockading the "Bonne Citoyenne."

Porter now found it necessary to decide upon a course of action. The news which he had received made it appear most improbable that he would fall in with either of the United States vessels for which he was seeking. He was far from home, cruising in seas much frequented by British men-of-war. There were no naval stations or outposts belonging to the United States, into which he could put for protection or repairs; for then, as now, the nation ignored the necessity of such supply-stations. To return home was peculiarly distasteful to the captain, who had set sail with the intention of undertaking a long cruise. In this dilemma, he wasted but little time in thought. By rounding Cape Horn, he would carry the "Essex" into the Pacific Ocean, where British merchantmen abounded and men-of-war were few. It was an adventurous and a perilous expedition to undertake; but Porter, having decided upon it, wasted no time in getting under way. That very night he took his ship out of the snug harbor of St. Catherine's, and started upon his long voyage around the Horn.

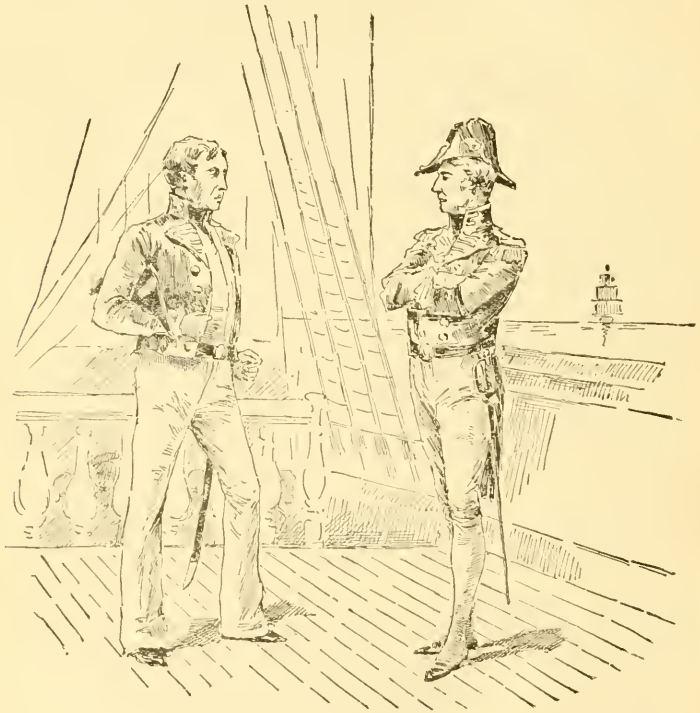
A winter voyage around Cape Horn, even in the stoutest of ships, is an undertaking to be dreaded by the most courageous seamen. The "Essex" seemed to meet with more than her share of stormy weather. From the night when she set sail from St. Catherine's, until she dropped anchor in a harbor of the Island of Mocha, almost every day witnessed a struggle for supremacy between the raging ocean on the one side, and skilful seamanship and nautical science on the other. Capt. Porter, however, proved himself ready for every emergency. No peril of the deep was unforeseen, no ounce of prevention unprovided. The safety of his ship, and the health of his men, were ever in his thoughts; and accord-

ingly, when the "Essex" rounded into the Pacific Ocean, both men and ship were in condition to give their best service to the enterprise in which they were embarked.

After rounding Cape Horn, the "Essex" made her way northward along the desolate coast of Chili, until she reached the Island of Mocha. Here she anchored for a day, giving the crew a much needed run on shore, which they enjoyed with all the zest of schoolboys out for a day's holiday. The island afforded little in the way of fresh stores; but some pigs and horses were shot, and devoured with gusto by men who for over two months had not tasted fresh meat. From this point the frigate made for Valparaiso, and, after reconnoitring the port, put in for water and stores. The officers were received with much hospitality by the townspeople, and, after a few days' stay, were tendered a complimentary ball, — an entertainment into which the young officers entered with great glee. But, unhappily for their evening's pleasure, the dancing had hardly begun, when a midshipman appeared at the door of the hall, and announced that a large frigate was standing into the harbor. Deserting their fair partners, the people of the "Essex" hastened to their ship and were soon in readiness for the action; while the townspeople thronged the hills overlooking the sea, in the hopes of seeing a naval duel. But the frigate proved to be a Spaniard; and, of course, no action occurred.

The "Essex" remained several days at Valparaiso, and during her stay two or three American whalers put into the harbor. From the captains of these craft, Porter learned that the Peruvians were sending out privateers to prey upon American commerce, and that much damage had already been done by these marauders, who were no more than pirates, since no war existed between Peru and the United States. Porter determined to put an immediate stop to the operations of the Peruvian cruisers, and had not long to wait for an opportunity. A day or two after leaving Valparaiso, a sail was sighted in the offing, which was soon near enough to be made out a vessel-of-war, disguised as a whaler. Porter hung out the English ensign, and caused an American whaler, with which he had that morning fallen in, to hoist a British flag over the stars and stripes. At this sight, the stranger hoisted the Spanish flag, and threw a shot across the bow of the "Essex." Porter responded by

a few shot that whizzed through the rigging just above the Spaniard's deck. The latter thereupon sent a boat to the "Essex;" and the officer who came aboard, thinking that he was on a British man-of-war, boasted of his ship's exploits among the American whalers. His vessel was the



THE PERUVIAN PRIVATEER.

Peruvian privateer "Nereyda" of fifteen guns, and she had captured two American whalers, whose crews were even then in the hold of the privateer. He admitted that Peru had no quarrel with the United States, and no reason for preying upon her commerce. The confession, so unsuspectingly made, gave Porter ample grounds for the capture of the

offending vessel. Curtly informing his astounded visitor that he was on a United States man-of-war, Porter ordered the gunners to fire two shots close to the privateer. This was done, and the Peruvian quickly hauled down his colors. The American officers, on boarding the prize, found twenty-three American sailors, who had been robbed of all that they possessed, stripped of half their clothing, and thrown into the hold These unfortunate men were released and sent to the "Essex;" after which all the guns and ammunition of the privateer were thrown overboard, and the vessel ordered to return to Callao.

After this act of summary justice, the "Essex" continued in her northward course. She touched at Callao; but, much to the disappointment of all on board, there were no British vessels among the shipping at that port. Nor could the lookouts, for some days, discern from the masthead any craft other than the double-hulled rafts of logs, called catamarans, in which the natives along the Peruvian coast make long voyages. Weary of such continued ill-luck, Porter determined to make for the Galapagos Islands, where it was the custom of the British whaling-ships to rendezvous. But it seemed that ill-fortune was following close upon the "Essex;" for she sailed the waters about the Galapagos, and sent out boats to search small bays and lagoons, without finding a sign of a ship. Two weeks passed in this unproductive occupation, and Porter had determined to abandon the islands, when he was roused from his berth on the morning of April 29, 1813, by the welcome cry of "Sail, ho!"

All hands were soon on deck, and saw a large ship in the offing. All sail was clapped on the frigate; and she set out in hot pursuit, flying the British ensign as a ruse to disarm suspicion. As the chase wore on, two more sail were sighted; and Porter knew that he had fallen in with the long-sought whalers. He had no doubt of his ability to capture all three; for in those southern seas a dead calm falls over the ocean every noon, and in a calm the boats of the "Essex" could easily take possession of the whalers. By eight o'clock in the morning, the vessel first sighted was overhauled, and hove to in obedience to a signal from the frigate. She proved to be the "Montezuma," Capt. Baxter, with a cargo of fourteen hundred barrels of sperm-oil. Baxter visited Capt. Porter in his cabin, and sat there unsuspectingly, giving the supposed British captain

information for his aid in capturing American ships. The worthy whaler little knew, as he chatted away, that his crew was being transferred to the frigate, and a prize-crew sent to take charge of the "Montezuma."

By noon the expected calm fell over the water; and the boats were ordered away to take possession of the two whalers, that lay motionless some eight miles from the "Essex." The distance was soon passed, and the two ships were ordered to surrender, which they quickly did, much astonished to find a United States man-of-war in that region. A breeze shortly after springing up, all the prizes bore down upon the frigate; and the gallant lads of the "Essex" had the pleasure of seeing themselves surrounded with captured property to the value of nearly half a million dollars. One of the vessels, the "Georgiana," was a good sailer, strongly built, and well fitted for a cruiser. Accordingly she was armed with sixteen guns and a number of swivels, and placed under the command of Lieut. Downes. With this addition to his force, and with the other two prizes following in his wake, Porter returned to the Galapagos Islands. The first sight of the far-off peaks of the desert islands rising above the water was hailed with cheers by the sailors, who saw in the Galapagos not a group of desolate and rocky islands, but a place where turtle was plenty, and shore liberty almost unlimited. Porter remained some days at the islands, urging the crew of the "Essex," as well as the prisoners, to spend much time ashore. Signs of the scurvy were evident among the men, and the captain well knew that in no way could the dread disease be kept away better than by constant exercise on the sands of the seashore. The sailors entered heartily into their captain's plans, and spent hours racing on the beach, swimming in the surf, and wandering over the uninhabited islands.

After a few days of this sort of life, the squadron put to sea again. The "Georgianna" now separated from the fleet, and started on an independent cruise, with orders for a rendezvous at certain specific times. The "Essex" continued to hover about the Galapagos, in the hopes of getting a few more whalers. She had not long to wait; for the whale ship "Atlantic" soon fell in her way, and was promptly snapped up. The captain of this ship was a Nantucket man, who had deserted the flag of his country, to cruise under what he thought to be the more powerful flag of Great Britain. Great was his disgust to find that by

his treachery he had lost all that he desired to protect. While in chase of the "Atlantic," a second sail had been sighted; and to this the "Essex" now gave chase. On being overhauled, the stranger at first made some show of fighting; but a shot or two from the guns of the frigate convinced him of the folly of this course, and he surrendered at discretion. The vessel proved to be the whale ship letter-of-marque "Greenwich;" a stout ship, of excellent sailing qualities. She carried ten guns, and was in every way a valuable prize.

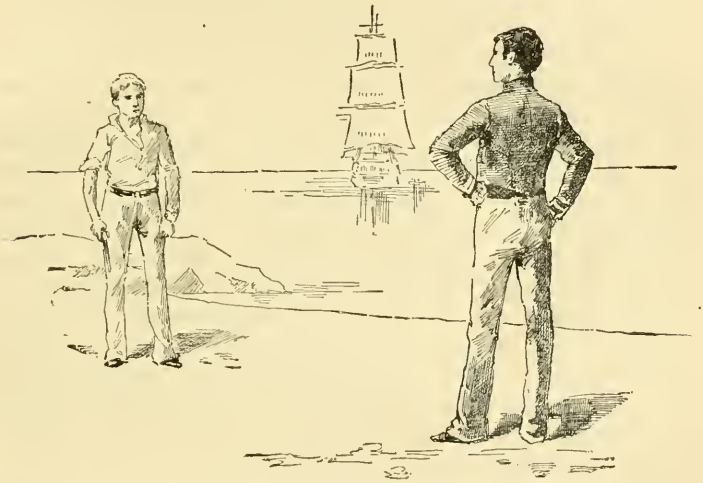
Porter had now been in the Pacific Ocean about three months. On the 24th of February, the "Essex," solitary defender of the flag of the United States in the Pacific, had turned her prow northward from Cape Horn, and embarked on her adventurous career in the most mighty of oceans. Now in May, Porter, as he trod the deck of his good ship, found himself master of a goodly squadron instead of one stanch frigate. The "Essex," of course, led the list, followed by the "Georgianna," sixteen guns, forty-two men; "Atlantic," six guns, twelve men; "Greenwich," ten guns, fourteen men; "Montezuma," two guns, ten men; "Policy," ten men. Of these the "Georgianna" had already received her armament and authority as a war-vessel; and the "Atlantic" showed such seaworthy qualities that Porter determined to utilize her in the same way. Accordingly he set sail for Tumbez, where he hoped to get rid of some of his prisoners, perhaps sell one or two of his prizes, and make the necessary changes in the "Atlantic." While on the way to Tumbez, a Spanish brig was overhauled. Her captain vastly edified Capt. Porter by informing him that the "Nereyda," a Peruvian privateer, had recently attacked a huge American frigate, and inflicted great damage upon the Yankee. But the frigate proving too powerful, the privateer had been forced to fly, and hastened her flight by throwing overboard all her guns and ammunition.

On the 19th of June, the "Essex" with her satellites cast anchor in the harbor of Tumbez. The first view of the town satisfied Porter that his hopes of selling his prizes there were without avail. A more squalid, dilapidated little seaside village, it would be hard to find. Hardly had the ships cast anchor, when the governor came off in a boat to pay a formal visit. Though clothed in rags, he had all the dignity of a Spanish hidalgo, and strutted about the quarter-deck with most laughable

self-importance. Notwithstanding his high official station, this worthy permitted himself to be propitiated with a present of one hundred dollars; and he left the ship, promising all sorts of aid to the Americans Nothing came of it all, however; and Porter failed to dispose of any of his prizes. While the "Essex" with her train of captives lay in the harbor at Tumbez, the "Georgianna" came into port, and was greeted with three cheers by the men of the frigate. Lieut. Downes reported that he had captured three British ships, carrying in all twenty-seven guns and seventy-five men. One of the prizes had been released on parole, and the other two were then with the "Georgianna." This addition to the number of vessels in the train of the "Essex" was somewhat of an annoyance to Capt. Porter, who saw clearly that so great a number of prizes would seriously interfere with his future movements against the enemy. He accordingly remained at Tumbez only long enough to convert the "Atlantic" into an armed cruiser under the name of the "Essex Junior," and then set sail, in the hopes of finding some port wherein he could sell his embarrassing prizes. His prisoners, save about seventy-five who enrolled themselves under the American flag, were paroled, and left at Tumbez; and again the little squadron put to sea. The "Essex Junior" was ordered to take the "Hector," "Catherine," "Policy," and "Montezuma" to Valparaiso, and there dispose of them, after which she was to meet the "Essex" at the Marquesas Islands. On her way to the rendezvous, the "Essex" stopped again at the Galapagos Islands, where she was lucky enough to find the British whaler "Seringapatam," known as the finest ship of the British whaling fleet. By her capture, the American whalers were rid of a dangerous enemy; for, though totally without authority from the British Crown, the captain of the "Seringapatam" had been waging a predatory warfare against such luckless Americans as fell in his path. Porter now armed this new prize with twenty-two guns, and considered her a valuable addition to his offensive force. She took the place of the "Georgianna," which vessel Porter sent back to the United States loaded with oil.

Among the embarrassments which the care of so many prizes brought upon the leader of the expedition was the difficulty of finding commanding officers for all the vessels. This difficulty was enhanced while the flotilla lay off the Galapagos Islands; for two officers, falling into a dis-

pute, settled their quarrel, after the manner of the day, by a duel. In the contest one, a lieutenant, aged only twenty-one years, was killed, and now lies buried in the sands of the desolate and lonely island. After this occurrence, the need for commanding officers became so imperative that even the purser and chaplain of the "Essex" were pressed into the service. Midshipmen twelve or fourteen years old found themselves in



THE DUEL AT THE GALAPAGOS ISLANDS

command of ships. David Farragut was one of the boys thus suddenly promoted, and in his journal has left a description of his experience as a boy commander.

"I was sent as prize-master to the 'Barclay,'" he writes. "This was an important event in my life; and, when it was decided that I was to take the ship to Valparaiso, I felt no little pride at finding myself in command at twelve years of age. This vessel had been recaptured from a Spanish *guarda costa.* The captain and his mate were on board; and I was to control the men sent from our frigate, while the captain was to navigate the vessel. Capt. Porter, having failed to dispose of the prizes as it was understood he intended, gave orders for the 'Essex

Junior' and all the prizes to start for Valparaiso. This arrangement caused great dissatisfaction on the part of the captain of the 'Barclay,' a violent-tempered old fellow; and, when the day arrived for our separation from the squadron, he was furious, and very plainly intimated to me that I would 'find myself off New Zealand in the morning,' to which I most decidedly demurred. We were lying still, while the other ships were fast disappearing from view; the 'Commodore' going north, and the 'Essex Junior' with her convoy steering to the south for Valparaiso.

"I considered that my day of trial had arrived (for I was a little afraid of the old fellow, as every one else was). But the time had come for me at least to play the man: so I mustered up courage, and informed the captain that I desired the topsail filled away. He replied that he would shoot any man who dared to touch a rope without his orders; he 'would go his own course, and had no idea of trusting himself with a d—d nutshell;' and then he went below for his pistols. I called my right-hand man of the crew, and told him my situation; I also informed him that I wanted the main topsail filled. He answered with a clear 'Ay, ay, sir!' in a manner which was not to be misunderstood, and my confidence was perfectly restored. From that moment I became master of the vessel, and immediately gave all necessary orders for making sail, notifying the captain not to come on deck with his pistols unless he wished to go overboard; for I would really have had very little trouble in having such an order obeyed."

On the 30th of September, the squadron fell in with the "Essex Junior," which had come from Valparaiso. Lieut. Downes reported that he had disposed of the prizes satisfactorily, and also brought news that the British frigate "Phoebe," and the sloops-of-war "Raccoon" and "Cherub," had been ordered to cruise the Pacific in search of the audacious "Essex." More than this, he secured statistics regarding the fleet of British whalers in the Pacific, that proved that Porter had completely destroyed the industry, having left but one whaler uncaptured. There was then no immediate work for Porter to do; and he determined to proceed with his squadron to the Marquesas Islands, and there lay up, to make needed repairs and alterations.

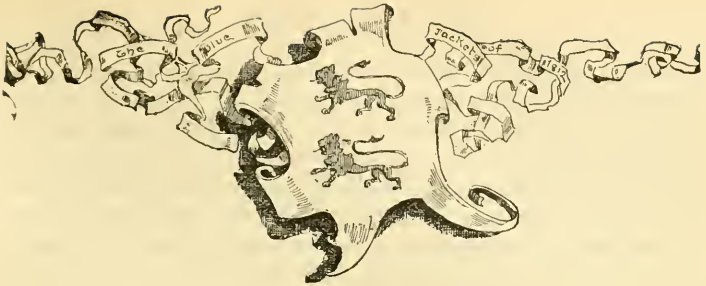
The Marquesas are a desolate group of rocky islands lying in the Pacific Ocean, on the western outskirts of Oceanica. In formation they

are volcanic, and rise in rugged mountain-peaks from the bosom of the great ocean. Sea-fowl of all sorts abound; but none of the lower mammals are to be found on the island, save swine which were introduced by Europeans. The people at the time of Porter's visit were simple savages, who had seldom seen the face of a white man; for at that early day voyagers were few in the far-off Pacific.

The island first visited by the "Essex" was known to the natives as Rooahooga. Here the frigate stopped for a few hours. During her stay, the water alongside was fairly alive with canoes and swimming natives. They were not allowed to come on board, but were immensely pleased by some fish-hooks and bits of iron let down to them from the decks of the frigate. Not to be outdone in generosity, the islanders threw up to the sailors cocoanuts, fruits, and fish. A boat-crew of jackies that went ashore was surrounded by a smiling, chattering throng of men, women, and children, who cried out incessantly, "*Taya, taya*" (friend, friend), and strove to bargain with them for fruits. They were a handsome, intelligent-looking people; tall, slender, and well formed, with handsome faces, and complexion little darker than that of a brunette. The men carried white fans, and wore bracelets of human hair, with necklaces of whales' teeth and shells about their necks, — their sole articles of clothing. Both men and women were tattooed; though the women seemed to content themselves with bands about the neck and arms, while the men were elaborately decorated from head to foot. Though some carried clubs and lances, they showed no signs of hostility, but bore themselves with that simple air of hospitality and unconscious innocence common to all savage peoples of tropical regions, uncorrupted by association with civilized white men.

Porter remained but a short time at this island, as its shallow bays afforded no safe anchorage for the vessels. But, charmed as he was with the friendly simplicity of the natives, he determined to remain some time in the vicinity, provided safe anchorage could be found. This essential was soon discovered at Nookaheevah, where the ships cast anchor in a fine harbor, which Porter straightway dubbed Massachusetts Bay. Hardly had the ship anchored, when a canoe containing three white men came alongside, and was ordered away by the captain, who thought them deserters from some vessel. The canoe then returned to the shore, and

the three whites were joined by a vast assemblage of armed natives. Porter now began to fear lest he had offended the natives, and proceeded at once to the beach, with four boats well armed and manned. But, by the time the boats' prows grated upon the white sand, every native had disappeared; and the sole figure visible was that of a young man, who advanced, and, giving a formal naval salute, announced himself as Midshipman John M. Maury, U.S.N. Porter was greatly surprised to find a midshipman in so strange a place; but the latter explained it by stating that he was on furlough, and had been left there by a merchant-vessel, which was to call for him. She had never returned, however, and he now hailed the "Essex" as an opportunity for escape. A second white man, who then put in an appearance, naked and tattooed like an Indian, proved to be an Englishman who had been on the island for years, and who, by his knowledge of the language and character of the natives, proved of great assistance to the Americans, during the long stay upon which Capt. Porter had determined.



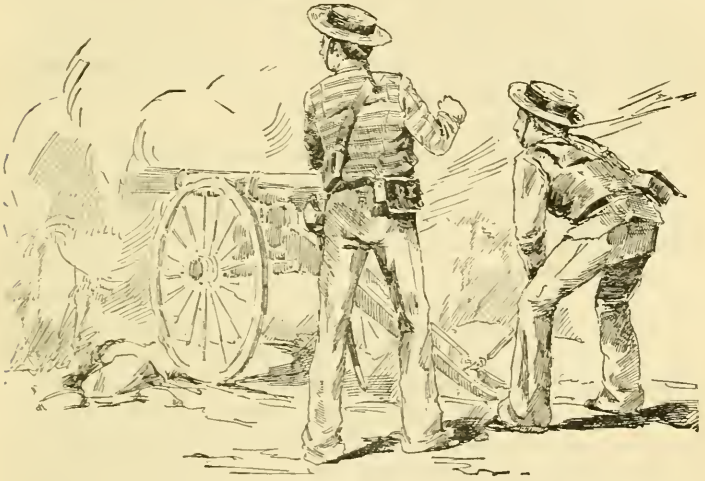
## CHAPTER XI.

WAR WITH THE SAVAGES. — THE CAMPAIGN AGAINST THE TYPEES. — DEPARTURE FROM NOOKAHEEVAH. — THE "ESSEX" ANCHORS AT VALPARAISO. — ARRIVAL OF THE "PHŒBE" AND "CHERUB." — THEY CAPTURE THE "ESSEX." — PORTER'S ENCOUNTER WITH THE "SATURN." — THE MUTINY AT NOOKAHEEVAH.

IT was now the last of October, 1813. Capt. Porter saw that the work he desired done upon the ships under his charge would occupy about six weeks, and he at once set about forming such relations of peace and amity with the natives as should enable him to procure the necessary supplies and prosecute his work unmolested. Much to his dismay, he had hardly begun his diplomatic palaver with the chiefs, when he learned that to keep one tribe friendly he must fight its battles against all other tribes on the island. The natives of Nookaheevah were then divided into a large number of tribal organizations. With three of these the Americans were brought into contact, — the Happahs, the Taeehs, and the Typees. The Taeehs lived in the fertile valley about the bay in which the American squadron was anchored. With these people Porter treated first, and made his appearance in their village in great state, being accompanied by the band, the marines, and several boats' crews of jackies. He was hospitably received by the natives, who crowded about to listen to the band, and wonder at the military precision of the marines, whom they regarded as supernatural beings.

Gattanewa, the chief, expressed his abounding love for the captain, and exchanged names with him, after the custom of the people; but ended by saying that the lawless Happahs were at war with the Taeehs, and the Americans, to gain the friendship of the latter tribe, must make common cause with them against their enemies. To this Porter demurred, but the wily chief thereupon brought forward a most conclusive argument. He said that the Happahs had cursed his mother's bones; and that, as he and Porter had exchanged names, that estimable woman was the captain's mother also, and the insult to her memory should be avenged It is probable that even this argument might have proved unavailing, had not the Happahs the next night descended upon the valley, and, having burned two hundred bread-fruit trees, departed, leaving word that the Americans were cowards, and dared not follow them into their mountain fastnesses. Porter saw that his food supplies were in danger from these vandals, and his knowledge of savage character convinced him that he could have no peace with any of the natives until the insolence of this tribe was punished. Accordingly he notified the Taeehs, that, if they would carry a gun to the top of one of the mountain peaks, he would send a party against the Happahs. The Taeehs eagerly agreed; and, after seeing the gun fired once or twice (a sight that set them fondling and kissing it, to show their reverence for so powerful a weapon), they set off up the steep mountain sides, tugging the gun after them. Lieut. Downes led the American forces. They had hardly reached the mountain tops, when the fighting began. The Happahs were armed with spears, and with slings, from which they threw heavy stones with terrific velocity. They seemed to know no fear, and stood gallantly before the advancing Americans, fairly darkening the air with clouds of stones and spears. The Americans, though few in number, — forty, opposed to nearly four thousand savages, — pressed forward, suffering but little from the weapons of their foes. From the deck of his frigate in the bay, Porter could see the steady advances of his forces, as they drove the Happahs from peak to peak. Before the Americans a huge native strode along, waving wildly the American flag. The howitzer came in the rear, and was every now and then discharged, to drive the foe from some formidable stronghold. So ignorant of fire-arms were the enemy, that they had no idea of their power, often fighting until the muzzle of a musket was

laid to their temples before the discharge. But before nightfall this warlike spirit was broken, and the victors returned to their ships, their native allies carrying five dead bodies slung on poles. Two only of the Americans were wounded. The next day Happah ambassadors came to sue for peace; and soon every tribe on the island joined the alliance, save the Typees, and a distant tribe that proudly bore the unpronounceable name of Hatecaaheottwohos. For two or three weeks peace reigned undisturbed. Work was pushed on the vessels. The rats with which the



FIRING THE HOWITZER.

"Essex" was infested were smoked out, an operation that necessitated the division of the crew between the shore and the other vessels. Porter himself, with his officers, took up his quarters in a tent pitched on the shore. Under some circumstances, such a change would have been rather pleasant than otherwise; but the rainy season had now come on, and the tent was little protection against the storms. Noticing this, the natives volunteered to put up such buildings as the captain desired, and proceeded to do so in a most expeditious manner. At early dawn four

thousand men set about the work, and by night had completed a walled village, containing a dwelling-house for the captain, another for his officers, a cooper's shop, hospital, bake-house, guard-house, and a shed for the sentinel to walk under. For their services the men received old nails, bits of iron hoop, and other metal scraps, with which they were highly delighted. The Americans were then living on the terms of the most perfect friendship with the natives. Many of the jackies had been taken into the families of the islanders, and all had formed most tender attachment for the beautiful island women; who, in their turn, were devoted to the "Malleekees," who were such mighty men of war, and brought them such pretty presents of beads and whales' teeth. The Americans entered into the celebrations and festivities of the islanders, watched their dances, joined their fishing expeditions, and soon were on the friendliest footing with their dusky hosts.

But so pleasant and peaceful an existence was not destined to continue long. The Typees, who inhabited the interior of the island, were beginning to stir up strife against the Americans; and Porter saw that their insolence must be crushed, or the whole native population would unite in war against him. But to begin a war with the Typees was far from Porter's wish. The way to their country lay over rugged precipices and through almost impenetrable jungles. The light-footed natives could easily enough scale the peaks, or thread the forests; but to Porter's sailors it would be an exhausting undertaking. No artillery could be taken into the field, and the immense number of natives that might be arrayed against the sailors made the success of the expedition very uncertain. Porter, therefore, determined to try to adjust the difficulty amicably, and with this purpose sent an ambassador to the Typees, proposing a peaceful alliance. The reply of the natives is an amusing example of the ignorant vainglory of savage tribes, unacquainted with the power of civilized peoples. The Typees saw no reason to desire the friendship of the Americans. They had always got along very well without it. They had no intention of sending hogs or fruit to sell to the Americans. If the Americans wanted supplies, let them come and take them. The Americans were cowards, white lizards, and mere dirt. The sailors were weaklings, who could not climb the Nookaheevan hills without aid from the natives. This, and much more of the same sort, was the answer of the Typees to Porter's friendly overtures.

This left no course open to the Americans save to chastise the insolent barbarians. The departure of the expedition was, however, delayed until a fort could be built for the protection of the American village. This work, a sand-bag battery, calculated to mount sixteen guns, was completed on the 14th of November, and preparations for the expedition were then begun. And, indeed, it was time that the Americans showed that they were not to be insulted with impunity. Already the Taeehs and Happahs were beginning to wonder at the delay, and rumors spread about the village that the whites were really the cowards for which the Typees took them. One man, a chief among the Happahs, was rash enough to call Porter a coward to his face; whereat the choleric captain seized a gun, and, rushing for the offender, soon brought him to his knees, the muzzle of the weapon against his head, begging for mercy. That man was ever after Porter's most able ally among the natives.

The preparations for war with the Typees were completed, and the expedition was about to set out, when a new difficulty arose, this time among the white men. First, a plot was discovered among the British prisoners for the recapture of the "Essex Junior." Their plan was to get the crew drunk, by means of drugged rum, and then rise, seize the vessel, and make off while the American forces were absent on the Typee expedition. This plot, being discovered, was easily defeated; and the leaders were put in irons. Then Porter discovered that disaffection had spread among his crew, which, for a time, threatened serious consequences. But this danger was averted by the captain's manly actions and words, which brought the jackies to his side as one man.

On the 28th of November the long-deferred expedition against the Typees left the snug quarters on the shore of Massachusetts Bay. The expedition went by sea, skirting the shore of the island, until a suitable landing-place near the territory of the hostile tribe was reached. The "Essex Junior" led the way, followed by five boats full of men, and ten war-canoes filled with natives, who kept up an unearthly din with discordant conches. When the forces landed, the friendly natives were seen to number at least five thousand men; while of the Americans, thirty-five, under the command of Capt. Porter, were considered enough for the work in hand. From the time the fighting began, the friendly natives kept carefully in the rear, and seemed to be only waiting to aid the victors, whether they should be Americans or Typees.

Capt. Porter and his followers, upon landing, sat down upon the beach for breakfast; but their repast was rudely disturbed by a shower of stones from an ambuscade of Typees in the edge of the wood. Stopping but a moment to finish their food, the jackies picked up their cutlasses and muskets, and started for the enemy. They were soon in the shady recesses of the tropical forest, but not a Typee was to be seen. That the enemy was there, however, was amply attested by the hail of stones that fell among the invaders, and the snapping of slings that could be heard on all sides. This was a kind of fighting to which the sailors were not accustomed; and for a moment they wavered, but were cheered on by their brave leader, and, pushing through the woods, came to a clearing on the banks of a narrow river. But here a sad disaster befell them in the loss of Lieut. Downes, whose ankle was broken by a stone. He was sent back to the ship, with an escort of five men; and the party, thus reduced to twenty-nine, forded the river, and scaled its high bank, cheering lustily, under a heavy fire from the Typees, who made a dogged stand on the farther shore. By this time, the last of their savage allies had disappeared.

The advance of the Americans was now checked by a jungle of such rank underbrush that the cutlasses of the men made no impression upon it; and they were forced to crawl forward on their hands and knees, under a constant fire from the enemy. From this maze, they burst out upon a clearing, and, looking about them, saw no sign of their savage foes, who had suddenly vanished. The solution of this mystery was soon discovered. After marching a few rods totally unmolested, a sudden turn in the path brought the Americans in sight of a formidable stone fortress, perched on a hill commanding the road, and flanked on either side by dense jungles. The wall of the fortress was of stone, seven feet high; and from it, and from the thickets on either side, came such demoniac yells, and such showers of stones, as convinced the Americans that they were in front of the Typee stronghold. For a time the invaders seemed in danger of annihilation. They were totally unprotected, and flanked by concealed foes, whose missiles were plunging down upon them with deadly effect. Some few secured places behind trees, and began a musketry fire; but the alarming cry soon arose that the ammunition was exhausted. Five men were immediately despatched to the beach for

more cartridges, while the few remaining determined to hold their position at any cost. But to this determination they were unable to adhere. Had the Typees charged, the whole American force would have been swept away like driftwood before a springtime flood. But the savages neglected their opportunity; and the Americans first gained the protection of the bushes, then fell back across the river, and so to the beach.

Here a council of war was held. They had been beaten back by savages; enormously outnumbered, to be sure, but still opposed by undisciplined warriors armed with rude weapons. The stain of that defeat must be washed out by a victory. Upon one point, all were agreed. The Happahs had played them false by leading them over the most dangerous roads, and into ambuscades of the enemy. To such treacherous guides, they would not again trust themselves. Before he again led his men to battle, Porter wished to try diplomacy. Although he knew that he had been beaten in the engagement, it would never do to confess defeat before so many savages (for the Taeehs and Happahs were now swarming about him, discussing the fight). Accordingly a messenger was sent to tell the Typees that a handful of white men had driven them into their fort, killing and wounding many. Now a large re-enforcement of white men was on the beach, ready to drive them from their valley, but that if they would sue for peace they might yet save their lives and their villages. At this the Typees laughed. "Tell Opotee," said they, "that we have plenty of men to spare; while his men are few. We have killed his chief warrior, and wounded many of his people. We are not afraid of his *boulics* [muskets]: they often miss fire, and, when they wound, don't hurt much. If the Malleekees can drive us from our valley, why don't they come and do it?—not stay on the beach and talk."

When Porter received this letter, he knew that he must again take the field against the Typees, or his half-hearted allies would abandon him and join his foes, giving him endless trouble, and putting a stop to the refitting of the ships in Massachusetts Bay. He now understood the power of his foes, and accordingly chose two hundred men to go with him on the second expedition. He also determined to leave behind the friendly savages, whose friendship was a very doubtful quality. The forces left the beach that very night, and began their weary march up the mountain-side. It was bright moonlight; so that the narrow moun-

tain paths, the fearful precipices, the tangled jungles, and the swamps and rivers were visible to the marching column. By midnight the Americans found themselves perched on the summit of a rocky peak overlooking the Typee valley, from which arose sounds of drum-beating, singing, and loud shouts of revelry. The guides who had led the American column said that the savages were rejoicing over their triumph, and were calling upon their gods to send rain and spoil the "Malleekees' *bouhies*." Porter knew the time was ripe for a surprise, and the men were eager to be led against the enemy; but the guides protested that no mortal men could descend the path leading to the Typee village, at night, so precipitous was the descent. The Americans were therefore forced to wait patiently until morning. Throwing themselves on the ground, the weary sailors were soon asleep, but were waked up in an hour by a heavy burst of rain. They saw the rain falling in sheets, and the sky banked with black clouds that gave little hope of a stoppage. From the valley below rose the triumphant yells of the Typees, who were convinced that their gods had sent the shower to spoil the white men's weapons. And, indeed, the floods poured down as though sent for that very service; so that at daybreak the Americans found that more than half their powder was spoiled. To make matters worse, the precipitous path leading down into the valley was so slippery that it would have been madness to attempt the descent. Accordingly Porter determined to retreat to the Happah village, and there wait for better weather. Before falling back, however, he ordered a volley fired, to show the savages that the fire-arms were not yet useless. The noise of the volley was the first intimation to the Typees that the Americans were so near them, and their village was at once thrown into the direst confusion. Cries of surprise mingled with the beating of drums, the blowing of horns, the shrieks of women and children, and the squealing of pigs being driven to places of safety. In the midst of the tumult the Americans retired to the Happah village, where they spent the remainder of that day and the following night.

The next morning dawned bright and cool after the rain; and the Americans sallied forth, determined to end this annoying affray in short order. They soon reached their former station on the cliffs, and, looking down upon the Typee territory, saw a beautiful valley, cut up by stone walls into highly cultivated farms, and dotted with picturesque villages.

But though their hearts may have been softened by the sight of so lovely a spot, so soon to be laid desolate, they were soon nerved to their work by a party of Typees, who were posted on the farther bank of a river that skirted the base of the cliff, and were calling out to the Americans, calling them cowards, and daring them to come down and fight. Porter gave the command; and the jackies were soon clambering down the cliffs, in the face of a rapid fire from their enemies. The bank of the river once gained, the Americans halted to rest for a few minutes, and then, fording the stream, pushed forward straight for the nearest village. The Typees hung upon the flank of the advancing column; now and then making fierce charges, but always beaten back with severe losses. The sailors suffered but little, and were soon in possession of the village, behind the walls of which the main body halted, while scouting parties were sent out to reconnoitre. After a short halt at this point, the invaders pushed forward to the next village, and so on up the valley, burning each village as soon as it was captured. Undismayed by their continued reverses, the Typees fought doggedly, scornfully refusing to listen to the peaceful overtures made by the American commander. After marching three or four miles, and fighting for every foot of the way, the Americans found themselves before an extensive village, which, from its size, and the strength of its fortifications, was evidently the Typee capital. Here the savages made a last determined stand, but to no avail. The Americans poured over the wall, and were soon in possession of the town. The beauty of the village, the regularity of its streets, and the air of comfort and civilization everywhere apparent, made it hard for Porter to give the fateful order that should commit all to the flames. But his duty was clear, and the order was given. Leaving the blazing capital behind them, the sailors retraced their steps to the ships, having completed the devastation of the valley that a day before was so peaceful, fertile, and lovely. The spirit of the Typees was thoroughly broken by this crushing blow; and for the next few days the ships were besieged by ambassadors from all the island tribes, begging for peace.

Feeling assured that he should have no further trouble with the natives, Porter now exerted all his energies to complete the repairs on the ships, that he might again take the sea. So rapidly did the work progress, that by the 9th of December the "Essex" and "Essex Junior"

were refitted, and stocked with fresh provisions of hogs, cocoanuts, and bananas; the "New Zealander," loaded with oil from the other prizes, was ordered to proceed to New York; while the "Greenwich," "Seringapatam," and "Hammond" were to remain at the islands until the "Essex" should return for them. These arrangements being made, the war-ships made ready to depart.

But now arose a difficulty, ludicrous in its cause, but which threatened to be serious in its effects. The ships had been lying in harbor for about two months; and during that time the sailors, with unlimited shore liberty, had made such ties as bound them closely to the native people. The young girls of the islands, with their comely faces and fair complexions, had played sad havoc with the hearts of the gallant tars of the "Essex;" and deep was the grumbling among the sailors when they heard that the time had come for them to bid farewell to their sweethearts. No openly mutinous demonstration was made; but so old a commander could not overlook the fact that some disaffection existed among his crew, and a little investigation disclosed the trouble. There could be no half-way measures adopted in the case, and Porter at once gave orders that all further intercourse with the shore should cease. That very night three sailors slipped into the sea, and swam ashore to meet their sweethearts; but the wily captain had stationed a patrol upon the beach, and the three luckless Leanders were sent back to the ship in irons. All the next day the native girls lined the shore of the bay, and with pleading gestures besought the captain to let the sailors come ashore, but to no avail. Some fair maidens even swam off to the ship, but were gruffly ordered away by the officers. All this was very tantalizing to the men, who hung over the bulwarks, looking at the fair objects of their adoration. But one man only showed signs of rebellion against the captain's authority; and Porter, calling him out before the crew, rebuked him, and sent him ashore in a native canoe: while the rest of the jackies sprang into the rigging, set the canvas, and the ship soon left the island, with its sorrowing nymphs, far in her wake.

The two vessels turned their heads toward Valparaiso, and made the port after an uneventful voyage of fift-ysix days. The frigate entered the harbor at once, and cast anchor; while the "Essex Junior" was ordered to cruise about outside, keeping a close watch for the enemy's ships. The

friendship of the people of the town seemed as great as during the first visit of the frigate to the port; and a series of entertainments was begun, that culminated in a grand ball upon the "Essex" on the night of the 7th of February, 1814. For that one night the officers of the "Essex Junior" were absolved from their weary duty of patrolling the sea at the mouth of the harbor. The vessel was anchored at a point that commanded a view of the ocean; and her officers, arrayed in the splendor of full dress, betook themselves on board of the frigate. At midnight, after an evening of dancing and gayety, Lieut. Downes left the "Essex," and returned to his vessel, which immediately weighed anchor and put to sea. The festivities on the frigate continued a little time longer; and then, the last ladies having been handed down the gangway, and pulled ashore, the work of clearing away the decorations began. While the ship's decks were still strewn with flags and flowers, while the awnings still stretched from stem to stern, and the hundreds of gay lanterns still hung in the rigging, the "Essex Junior" was seen coming into the harbor with a signal flying. The signal quartermaster rushed for his book, and soon announced that the flags read, "Two enemy's ships in sight." At this moment more than half the crew of the "Essex" were on shore; but a signal set at the ship's side recalled the men, and in an hour and a half the ship was ready for action; while the "Essex Junior" cast anchor in a supporting position.

The two strange vessels were the "Cherub" and the "Phœbe," British men-of-war. They rounded into the harbor about eight A.M., and bore down towards the American ships. The "Phœbe," the larger of the two Englishmen, drew close to the "Essex;" and her commander, Capt. Hillyar, sprang upon the taffrail, and asked after Capt. Porter's health. Porter responded courteously; and, noticing that the "Phœbe" was coming closer than the customs of war-vessels in a neutral port permitted, warned the Englishman to keep his distance, or trouble would result. Hillyar protested that he meant no harm, but nevertheless continued his advance until the two ships were almost fouled. Porter called the boarders to the bow; and they crowded forward, armed to the teeth, and stripped for the fight. The "Phœbe" was in such a position that she lay entirely at the mercy of the "Essex," and could not bring a gun to bear in her own defence. Hillyar, from his position on the taffrail, could

see the American boarders ready to spring at the word of command, and the muzzles of the cannon ready to blow the ship out of water. There is little doubt that he was astonished to find the "Essex" so well prepared for the fray, for he had been told that more than half her crew had gone ashore. Relying upon this information, he had probably planned to capture the "Essex" at her moorings, regardless of the neutrality of the port. But he had now brought himself into a dangerous position, and Porter would have been justified in opening fire at once. But the apologies and protestations of the British captain disarmed him, and he unwisely let the "Phœbe" proceed unmolested.

In his journal, Farragut thus describes this incident: "We were all at quarters, and cleared for action, waiting with breathless anxiety for the command from Capt. Porter to board, when the English captain appeared, standing on the after-gun, in a pea-jacket, and in plain hearing said, —

"'Capt. Hillyar's compliments to Capt. Porter, and hopes he is well.'

"Porter replied, 'Very well, I thank you. But I hope you will not come too near, for fear some accident might take place which would be disagreeable to you.' And, with a wave of his trumpet, the kedge-anchors went up to our yard-arms, ready to grapple the enemy.

"Capt. Hillyar braced back his yards, and remarked to Porter, that, if he did fall aboard him, he begged to assure the captain that it would be entirely accidental.

"'Well,' said Porter, 'you have no business where you are. If you touch a rope-yarn of this ship, I shall board instantly.'"

Notwithstanding Porter's forbearance, the incident came near leading to a battle, through the action of one of the crew, who had come off from shore with his brain rather hazy from heavy drinking. This man was standing by a gun, with a lighted brand in his hand, ready to fire the piece, when he thought he saw an Englishman grinning at him through one of the open ports of the "Phœbe." Highly enraged, he shouted out, "My fine fellow, I'll soon stop your making faces!" and reached out to fire the gun; when a heavy blow from an officer, who saw the action, stretched him on the deck. Had that gun been fired, nothing could have saved the "Phœbe."

The two hostile ships cast anchor within long gun-shot of the Americans, and seemed prepared for a long season in port. For the next few

weeks the British and American officers and seamen met frequently on shore; and a kind of friendship sprang up between them, although they were merely waiting for a favorable moment to begin a deadly strife. Some incidents, however, took place which rather disturbed the amicable relations of the two parties. At the masthead of the "Essex" floated a flag bearing the motto, "Free Trade and Sailors' Rights." This flag gave great offence to the British, who soon displayed a flag with the inscription, "God and Country, British Sailors' Best Rights. Traitors offend both." To this Americans responded with, "God, our Country and Liberty. Tyrants offend them." Here the debate closed, and seemed to arouse no unfriendly feeling; for Porter and Hillyar talked it over amicably on shore. In the course of this conversation, Porter challenged the "Phœbe" to meet the "Essex" alone; but Hillyar declined the proposition. Shortly after this, the crews of the hostile ships began the practice of singing songs *at* each other; the Americans beginning with "Yankee Doodle," while the British retorted with "God save the King." Then the poets of the forecastle set to work, and ground out verses that would prove particularly obnoxious to the enemy. One of the American songs recited at full length the capture of the "Guerriere." The character of the poetry may be judged by the first verse.

"Ye tars of our country, who seek on the main
The cause for the wrongs your country sustain,
Rejoice and be merry, for bragging John Bull
Has got a sound drubbing from brave Capt. Hull."

The British responded with triumphant verses upon the capture of the "Chesapeake," news of which had just reached Valparaiso. Their poetry was quite as bad.

"Brave Broke he waved his sword,
And he cried, 'Now, lads, aboard;
And we'll stop their singing,
Yankee Doodle Dandy, O!'"

Porter now wished to get rid of some of the prizes with which he was encumbered. He could not burn them in the harbor, and the British ships kept too close a watch upon him to permit his ships to leave the harbor for an hour: so he was forced to wait many days for an opportunity. On the 14th of February the opportunity came; and the "Hector"

was towed out to sea, and set a-fire. Two weeks later, the "Phœbe" came alone to the mouth of the harbor, and, after showing her motto-flag, hove to, and fired a gun to windward. This Porter understood to be a challenge, and he at once put out in the "Essex." But the "Phœbe" had no intention of entering a fair and equal fight; for she quickly joined her consort, and the two then chased the "Essex" back to port. Much talk and a vast deal of correspondence grew out of this affair, which certainly did not redound to the credit of the British.

On the 28th of March the wind blew with such force that the larboard cable of the "Essex" parted; and the ship, drifting before the wind, dragged her starboard cable out to sea. Knowing that the British ships were in waiting outside, Porter lost no time in getting on sail and trying to beat back into the harbor. But, just as the ship was rounding the point, there came up a heavy squall, which carried away the main top-mast, throwing several topmen into the sea. In her disabled state the frigate could not regain the harbor; but she ran into a little cove, and anchored within half pistol-shot of the shore. Here she was in neutral waters; and, had Capt. Hillyar been a man of his word, the "Essex" would have been safe: for that officer, on being asked by Porter whether he would respect the neutrality of the port, had replied with much feeling, "You have paid so much respect to the neutrality of the port, that I feel bound in honor to respect it." But he very quickly forgot this respect, when he saw his enemy lying crippled and in his power, although in neutral waters.

Hardly had the "Essex" cast anchor, when the two British ships drew near, their actions plainly showing that they intended to attack the crippled frigate. The "Essex" was prepared for action, the guns beat to quarters; and the men went to their places coolly and bravely, though each felt at his heart that he was going into a hopeless fight. The midshipmen had hardly finished calling over the quarter-lists, to see that every man was at his station, when the roar of the cannon from the British ships announced the opening of the action. The "Phœbe" had taken up a position under the stern of the American frigate, and pounded away with her long eighteens; while the "Essex" could hardly get a gun to bear in return. The "Cherub" tried her fortune on the bow, but was soon driven from that position, and joined her consort. The two kept up a destructive

fire, until Porter got three long guns out of the cabin-windows, and drove the enemy away. After repairing damages, the British took up a position just out of range of the "Essex's" carronades, and began a rapid and effective fire from their long eighteens.

Such an action as this was very trying to the crew of the "Essex." The carronades against which Porter had protested when his ship was armed were utterly useless against an enemy who used such cautious tactics. On the deck of the frigate men were falling on every side. One shot entered a port, and killed four men who stood at a gun, taking off the heads of the last two. The crash and roar of the flying shots were incessant. As the guns became crippled for lack of men, the junior officers took a hand in all positions. Farragut writes, "I performed the duty of captain's aid, quarter-gunner, powder-boy, and, in fact, did every thing that was required of me. . . . When my services were not required for other purposes, I generally assisted in working a gun; would run and bring powder from the boys, and send them back for more, until the captain wanted me to carry a message; and this continued to occupy me during the action." Once during the action a midshipman came running up to Porter, and reported that a gunner had deserted his post. Porter's reply was to turn to Farragut (the lad was only twelve years old), and say, "Do your duty, sir." The boy seized a pistol, and ran away to find the coward, and shoot him in his tracks. But the gunner had slipped overboard, and made his way to the shore, and so escaped.

After the "Essex" had for some time suffered from the long-range fire of the enemy, Capt. Porter determined to make sail, and try to close with his foes. The rigging had been so badly shot away that the flying jib was the only sail that could be properly set. With this, and with the other sails hanging loose from the yards, the "Essex" ran down upon the British, and made such lively play with her carronades, that the "Cherub" was forced to haul off for repairs, and the tide of war seemed to be setting in favor of the Americans. But, though the gallant blue-jackets fought with desperation, their chances for success were small. The decks were strewn with dead, the cock-pit was full, and the enemy's shot were constantly adding to the number of dead and dying. Young Farragut, who had been sent below after some gun-primers, was coming up the ladder, when a man standing at the opening of the hatchway was

struck full in the face by a cannon-ball, and fell back, carrying the lad with him. The mutilated body fell full upon the boy, who lay for a time unconscious; then, jumping to his feet, ran, covered with blood, to the quarter-deck. Capt. Porter saw him, and asked if he was wounded. "I believe not, sir," answered the midshipman. "Then," said the captain, "where are the primers?" Farragut remembered his errand, and dashed below to execute it. When he emerged the second time, he saw the captain (his adopted father) fall, and running up asked if he was wounded. "I believe not, my son," was the response; "but I felt a blow on the top of my head." He had probably been knocked down by the wind of a passing shot.

But the end of the action was now near. Dreadful havoc had been made in the ranks of both officers and men. The cock-pit would hold no more wounded; and the shots were beginning to penetrate its walls, killing the sufferers waiting for the surgeon's knife. Lieut. McKnight was the only commissioned officer on duty. The ship had been several times on fire, and the magazine was endangered. Finally, the carpenter reported that her bottom was so cut up that she could float but a little while longer. On learning this, Porter gave the order for the colors to be hauled down, which was done. The enemy, however, kept up their deadly fire for ten minutes after the "Essex" had struck.

David Farragut narrates some interesting incidents of the surrender. He was sent by the captain to find and destroy the signal book before the British should come aboard; and, this having been done, he went to the cock-pit to look after his friends. Here he found Lieut. Cornell terribly wounded. When Farragut spoke to him, he said, "O Davy, I fear it's all up with me!" and died soon after. The doctor said, that, had this officer been operated upon an hour before, his life might have been saved; but when the surgeons proposed to drop another man, and attend to him, he replied, "No, no, doctor, none of that. Fair play's a jewel. One man's life is as dear as another's; I would not cheat any poor fellow out of his turn." Surely history nowhere records more noble generosity. Soon after this, when Farragut was standing on the deck, a little negro boy came running up to inquire about his master, Lieut. Wilmer, who had been knocked over by a shot. On learning his master's fate, he leaped over the taffrail into the sea, and was drowned.

After the "Essex" had been formally surrendered, boats were sent

to convey the prisoners to the British ships. In one of these Farragut was carried to the "Phœbe," and there fell into a second battle, in which the victory remained with him. "I was so mortified at our capture that I could not refrain from tears," he writes. "While in this uncomfortable state, I was aroused by hearing a young reefer call out, —

"'A prize! a prize! Ho, boys, a fine grunter, by Jove.'

"I saw at once that he had under his arm a pet pig belonging to our ship, called 'Murphy.' I claimed the animal as my own.

"'Ah,' said he, 'but you are a prisoner, and your pig also!'

"'We always respect private property,' I replied; and, as I had seized hold of 'Murphy,' I determined not to let go unless 'compelled by superior force.'

"This was fun for the oldsters, who immediately sung out, —

"'Go it, my little Yankee. If you can thrash Shorty, you can have your pig.'

"'Agreed,' cried I.

"A ring was formed in an open space, and at it we went. I soon found that my antagonist's pugilistic education did not come up to mine. In fact, he was no match for me, and was compelled to give up the pig. So I took Master Murphy under my arm, feeling that I had in some degree wiped out the disgrace of the defeat."

When the British ships with their prize returned to the quiet waters of the harbor, and began to take account of damages, it was found that the "Essex" had indeed fought a losing fight. On the "Phœbe," but four men were killed, and seven wounded; on the "Cherub," one killed and three wounded, made up the list of casualties. But on the "Essex" were fifty-eight killed, and sixty-six wounded; while an immense number of men were missing, who may have escaped to the shore or may have sunk beneath the waves. Certain it is some swimmers reached shore, though sorely wounded. One man had rushed on deck with his clothing all aflame, and swam ashore, though scarcely a square inch could be found on his body which was not burned. Another seaman had sixteen or eighteen scales of iron chipped from the muzzle of his gun driven into his legs, yet he reached the shore in safety.

After some delay, the "Essex Junior" was disarmed; and the prisoners, having given their paroles, were placed on board her, with a letter

of safe-conduct from Capt. Hillyar to prevent their capture by any British man-of-war in whose path they might fall. But this letter availed them little; for, after an uneventful voyage to the northward, the "Essex Junior" found herself brought to by a shot from the British frigate "Saturn," off Sandy Hook. The boarding-officer took Capt. Hillyar's letter to the commander of the "Saturn," who remarked that Hillyar had no authority to make any such agreement, and ordered the "Essex Junior" to remain all night under the lee of the British ship. Capt. Porter was highly indignant, and handed his sword to the British officer, saying that he considered himself a prisoner. But the Englishman declined the sword, and was about to return to his ship, when Porter said, "Tell the captain that I am his prisoner, and do not consider myself any longer bound by my contract with Capt. Hillyar, which he has violated; and I shall act accordingly." By this Porter meant that he now considered himself absolved from his parole, and free to escape honorably if an opportunity should offer.

Accordingly at seven o'clock the following morning, a boat was stealthily lowered from the "Essex Junior;" and Porter, descending into it, started for the shore, leaving a message, that, since British officers showed so little regard for each other's honor, he had no desire to trust himself in their hands. The boat had gone some distance before she was sighted by the lookout on the "Saturn," for the hull of the "Essex Junior" hid her from sight. As soon as the flight was noticed, the frigate made sail in chase, and seemed likely to overhaul the audacious fugitives, when a thick fog set in, under cover of which Porter reached Babylon, L.I., nearly sixty miles distant. In the mean time, the "Essex Junior," finding herself hidden from the frigate by the fog-bank, set sail, and made for the mouth of the harbor. She was running some nine knots an hour when the fog showed signs of lifting; and she came up into the wind, that the suspicion of the British might not be aroused As it happened, the "Saturn" was close alongside when the fog lifted, and her boat soon came to the American ship. An officer, evidently very irate, bounded upon the deck, and said brusquely, —

"You must have been drifting very fast. We have been making nine knots an hour, and yet here you are alongside."

"So it appears," responded the American lieutenant coolly.

"We saw a boat leave you, some time ago," continued the Englishman. "I suppose Capt. Porter went in it?"

"Yes. You are quite right."

"And probably more of you will run away, unless I cut away your boats from the davits."

"Perhaps that would be a good plan for you to adopt."

"And I would do it very quickly, if the question rested with me."

"You infernal puppy," shouted the American officer, now thoroughly aroused, "if you have any duty to do, do it; but, if you insult me further, I'll throw you overboard!"

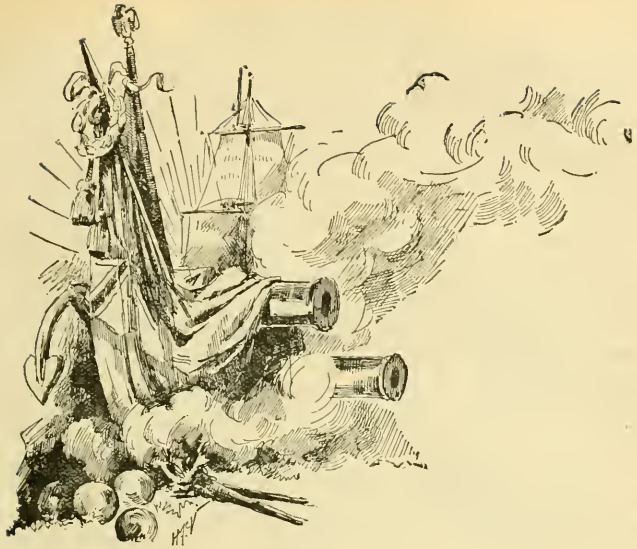
With a few inarticulate sounds, the Englishman stepped into his boat, and was pulled back to the "Saturn," whence soon returned a second boat, bearing an apology for the boarding-officer's rudeness. The boarders then searched all parts of the ship, mustered her crew on the plea that it contained British deserters, and finally released her, after having inflicted every possible humiliation upon her officers. The "Essex Junior" then proceeded to New York, where she was soon joined by Capt. Porter. The whole country united in doing honor to the officers, overlooking the defeat which closed their cruise, and regarding only the persistent bravery with which they had upheld the cause of the United States in the far-off waters of the Pacific.

Before closing the account of Porter's famous cruise, the story of the ill-fortune which befell Lieut. Gamble should be related. This officer, it will be remembered, was left at Nookaheevah with the prizes "Greenwich," "Seringapatam," and "Hammond." Hardly had the frigate disappeared below the horizon, when the natives began to grow unruly; and Gamble was forced to lead several armed expeditions against them. Then the sailors under his charge began to show signs of mutiny. He found himself almost without means of enforcing his authority, and the disaffection spread daily. The natives, incited by the half-savage Englishman who had been found upon the island, began to make depredations upon the live-stock; while the women would swim out to the ships by night, and purloin bread, aided by their lovers among the crews. To the lieutenant's remonstrances, the natives replied that "Opotee" was not coming back, and they would do as they chose; while the sailors heard his orders with ill-concealed contempt, and made but a pretext of obeying them. In

the middle of April three sailors stole a boat from the "Greenwich," and, stocking it well with ammunition and provisions, deserted, and were never again seen. One month later, mutiny broke out in its worst form. Lieut. Gamble and his two midshipmen, being upon the "Seringapatam," were knocked down by the sailors, gagged, bound, and thrust into the hold. The mutineers then went ashore, spiked the guns in the fort, and then, hoisting the British colors over the captured ship, set sail. Lieut. Gamble was badly wounded in the foot by a pistol-shot fired by one of his guards. Notwithstanding his wound, he, with the two lieutenants and two loyal seamen, was turned adrift in an open boat. After long and painful exertions, they reached the shore, and returned to the bay, where the "Greenwich" still lay at anchor. The mutineers, thirteen of whom were Englishmen who had enlisted in the American service, steered boldly out to sea, and were nevermore heard of. The half-savage Englishman, Wilson, was supposed to be at the bottom of this uprising, and some days later a boat's crew from the "Greenwich" went ashore to capture him. Soon after, Gamble, anxiously watching the shore, saw a struggle upon the beach, the natives rushing down on all sides, the boat overturned in the surf, and two white men swimming towards the ship, making signals of distress. Mr. Clapp, with two men, sprang into a boat, and put off to the aid of the swimmers, leaving Gamble alone on the ship. Two large canoes loaded with savages then left the beach, and swiftly bore down towards the "Essex;" but Gamble, lamed though he was, seized a lighted brand, and hobbled along the deck of the ship, firing her guns with such effect that the savages were driven back, the beach cleared, and Mr. Clapp enabled to save the two struggling men. When the boat returned to the ship, it was learned that Midshipman Feltus and five men had been basely murdered by the savages. There were now left but seven Americans; and of these but two were well, and fit for duty. Setting the "Greenwich" on fire, this little band boarded the "Hammond," and made their way to sea. But between the Sandwich Islands and Honolulu they fell in with the "Cherub," by whom they were captured, and kept prisoners for nine months, when, peace being declared, they were released.

So ended the last incident of the gallant cruise of the "Essex." History has few more adventurous tales to relate.

DESTRUCTION OF THE "MAINE," HAVANA, FEBRUARY 15, 1898



## CHAPTER XII.

CAPTURE OF THE "SURVEYOR."—WORK OF THE GUNBOAT FLOTILLA.—OPERATIONS ON CHESAPEAKE BAY.—COCKBURN'S DEPREDATIONS.—CRUISE OF THE "ARGUS."—HER CAPTURE BY THE "PELICAN."—BATTLE OF THE "ENTERPRISE" AND "BOXER."—END OF THE YEAR 1813 ON THE OCEAN.

WITH the capture of the "Chesapeake" in June, 1813, we abandoned our story of the naval events along the coast of the United States, to follow Capt. Porter and his daring seamen on their long cruise into far-off seas. But while the men of the "Essex" were capturing whalers in the Pacific, chastising insolent savages at Nookaheevah, and fighting a gallant but unsuccessful fight at Valparaiso, other blue-jackets were as gallantly serving their country nearer home. From Portsmouth to Charleston the coast was watched by British ships, and collisions between the enemies were of almost daily occurrence. In many of these actions great bravery was shown on both

sides. Noticeably was this the case in the action between the cutter "Surveyor" and the British frigate "Narcissus," on the night of June 12. The "Surveyor," a little craft manned by a crew of fifteen men, and mounting six twelve-pound carronades, was lying in the York River near Chesapeake Bay. From the masthead of the "Narcissus," lying farther down the bay, the spars of the cutter could be seen above the tree-tops; and an expedition was fitted out for her capture. Fifty men, led by a veteran officer, attacked the little vessel in the darkness, but were met with a most determined resistance. The Americans could not use their carronades, but with their muskets they did much execution in the enemy's ranks. But they were finally overpowered, and the little cutter was towed down under the frigate's guns. The next day Mr. Travis, the American commander, received his sword which he had surrendered, with a letter from the British commander, in which he said, "Your gallant and desperate attempt to defend your vessel against more than double your number, on the night of the 12th inst., excited such admiration on the part of your opponents as I have seldom witnessed, and induced me to return you the sword you had so nobly used, in testimony of mine. . . . In short, I am at a loss which to admire most, the previous arrangement on board the 'Surveyor,' or the determined manner in which her deck was disputed, inch by inch."

During the summer of 1813, the little gunboats, built in accordance with President Jefferson's plan for a coast guard of single-gun vessels, did a great deal of desultory fighting, which resulted in little or nothing. They were not very seaworthy craft, the heavy guns mounted amidships causing them to careen far over in even a sailor's "capfull" of wind. When they went into action, the first shot from the gun set the gunboat rocking so that further fire with any precision of aim was impossible. The larger gunboats carried sail enough to enable them to cruise about the coast, keeping off privateers and checking the marauding expeditions of the British. Many of the gunboats, however, were simply large gallies propelled with oars, and therefore confined in their operations to bays and inland waters. The chief scene of their operations was Chesapeake Bay.

This noble sheet of water had been, since the very opening of the year 1813, under the control of the British, who had gathered there their most powerful vessels under the command of Admiral Cockburn, whose

name gained an unenviable notoriety for the atrocities committed by his forces upon the defenceless inhabitants of the shores of Chesapeake Bay. Marauding expeditions were continually sent from the fleet to search the adjacent country for supplies. When this method of securing provisions failed, Cockburn hit upon the plan of bringing his fleet within range of a village, and then commanding the inhabitants to supply his needs, under penalty of the instant bombardment of the town in case of refusal. Sometimes this expedient failed, as when Commodore Beresford, who was blockading the Delaware, called upon the people of Dover to supply him at once with "twenty-five large bullocks and a proportionate quantity of vegetables and hay." But the sturdy inhabitants refused, mustered the militia, dragged some old cannon down to the water-side, and, for lack of cannon-balls of their own, valiantly fired back those thrown by the British, which fitted the American ordnance exactly.

Soon after this occurrence, a large party from Cockburn's fleet landed at Havre de Grace, and, having driven away the few militia, captured and burned the town. Having accomplished this exploit, the marauders continued their way up the bay, and turning up into the Sassafras River ravaged the country on both sides of the little stream. After spreading distress far and wide over the beautiful country that borders Chesapeake Bay, the vandals returned to their ships, boasting that they had despoiled the Americans of at least seventy thousand dollars, and injured them to the amount of ten times that sum.

By June, 1813, the Americans saw that something must be done to check the merciless enemy who had thus revived the cruel vandalism, which had ceased to attend civilized warfare since the middle ages. A fleet of fifteen armed gallies was fitted out to attack the frigate of Cockburn's fleet that lay nearest to Norfolk. Urged forward by long sweeps, the gunboats bore down upon the frigate, which, taken by surprise, made so feeble and irregular a response that the Americans thought they saw victory within their grasp. The gunboats chose their distance, and opened a well-directed fire upon their huge enemy, that, like a hawk attacked by a crowd of sparrows, soon turned to fly. But at this moment the wind changed, enabling two frigates which were at anchor lower down the bay to come up to the aid of their consort. The American gunboats drew off slowly, firing as they departed.

This attack infused new energy into the British, and they at once began formidable preparations for an attack upon Norfolk. On the 20th of June they moved forward to the assault, — three seventy-four-gun ships, one sixty-four, four frigates, two sloops, and three transports. They were opposed by the American forces stationed on Craney Island, which commands the entrance to Norfolk Harbor. Here the Americans had thrown up earthworks, mounting two twenty-four, one eighteen, and four six pound cannon. To work this battery, one hundred sailors from the "Constellation," together with fifty marines, had been sent ashore. A large body of militia and a few soldiers of the regular army were also in camp upon the island.

The British set the 22d as the date for the attack; and on the morning of that day, fifteen large boats, filled with sailors, marines, and soldiers to the number of seven hundred, put off from the ships, and dashed toward the batteries. At the same time a larger force tried to move forward by land, but were driven back, to wait until their comrades in the boats should have stormed and silenced the American battery. But that battery was not to be silenced. After checking the advance of the British by land, the Americans waited coolly for the column of boats to come within point-blank range. On they came, bounding over the waves, led by the great barge "Centipede," fifty feet long, and crowded with men. The blue-jackets in the shore battery stood silently at their guns. Suddenly there arose a cry, "Now, boys, are you ready?" "All ready," was the response. "Then fire!" And the great guns hurled their loads of lead and iron into the advancing boats. The volley was a fearful one; but the British still came on doggedly, until the fire of the battery became too terrible to be endured. "The American sailors handled the great guns like rifles," said one of the British officers, speaking of the battle. Before this terrific fire, the advancing column was thrown into confusion. The boats, drifting upon each other, so crowded together that the oarsmen could not make any headway. A huge round shot struck the "Centipede," passing through her diagonally, leaving death and wounds in its track. The shattered craft sunk, and was soon followed by four others. The order for retreat was given; and, leaving their dead and some wounded in the shattered barges that lay in the shallow water, the British fled to their ships. Midshipman Tatnall, who, many years later, served in the

Confederate navy, waded out with several sailors, and, seizing the "Centipede," drew her ashore. He found several wounded men in her, — one a Frenchman, with both legs shot away. A small terrier dog lay whimpering in the bow. His master had brought him along for a run on shore, never once thinking of the possibility of the flower of the British navy being beaten back by the Americans.

So disastrous a defeat enraged the British, who proceeded to wreak their vengeance upon the little town of Hampton, which they sacked and burned, committing acts of shameful violence, more in accordance with the character of savages than that of civilized white men. The story of the sack of Hampton forms no part of the naval annals of the war, and in its details is too revolting to deserve a place here. It is a narrative of atrocious cruelty not to be paralleled in the history of warfare in the nineteenth century.

Leaving behind him the smoking ruins of Hampton, Cockburn with his fleet dropped down the bay, and, turning southward, cruised along the coast of the Carolinas. Anchoring off Ocracoke Inlet, the British sent a fleet of armed barges into Pamlico Sound to ravage the adjoining coast. Two privateers were found lying at anchor in the sound, — the "Anaconda" of New York, and the "Atlas" of Philadelphia. The British forces, eight hundred in number, dashed forward to capture the two vessels. The "Atlas" fell an easy prey; but the thirteen men of the "Anaconda" fought stoutly until all hope was gone, then, turning their cannon down upon the decks of their own vessel, blew great holes in her bottom, and escaped to the shore. After this skirmish, the British landed, and marched rapidly to Newbern; but, finding that place well defended by militia, made their way back to the coast, desolating the country through which they passed, and seizing cattle and slaves. The latter they are said to have sent to the West Indies and sold. From Pamlico Sound Cockburn went to Cumberland Island, where he established his winter quarters, and whence he continued to send out marauding expeditions during the rest of the year.

Very different was the character of Sir Thomas Hardy, who commanded the British blockading fleet off the New England coast. A brave and able officer, with the nature and training of a gentleman, he was as much admired by his enemies for his nobility, as Cockburn was hated

for his cruelty. It is more than possible, however, that the difference between the methods of enforcement of the blockade on the New England coast and on the Southern seaboard was due to definite orders from the British admiralty: for the Southern States had entered into the war heart and soul; while New England gave to the American forces only a faint-hearted support, and cried eagerly for peace at any cost. So strong was this feeling, that resolutions of honor to the brave Capt. Lawrence were defeated in the Massachusetts Legislature, on the ground that they would encourage others to embark in the needless war in which Lawrence lost his life. Whatever may have been the cause, however, the fact remains, that Hardy's conduct while on the blockade won for him the respect and admiration of the very people against whom his forces were arrayed.

On June 18 the British blockaders off New York Harbor allowed a little vessel to escape to sea, that, before she could be captured, roamed at will within sight of the chalk cliffs of England, and inflicted immense damage upon the commerce of her enemy. This craft was the little ten-gun brig "Argus," which left New York bound for France. She carried as passenger Mr. Crawford of Georgia, who had lately been appointed United States minister to France. After safely discharging her passenger at L'Orient, the "Argus" turned into the chops of the English Channel, and cruised about, burning and capturing many of the enemy's ships. She was in the very highway of British commerce; and her crew had little rest day or night, so plentiful were the ships that fell in their way. It was hard for the jackies to apply the torch to so many stanch vessels, that would enrich the whole crew with prize-money could they but be sent into an American port. But the little cruiser was thousands of miles from any American port, and no course was open to her save to give every prize to the flames. After cruising for a time in the English Channel, Lieut. Allen, who commanded the "Argus," took his vessel around Land's End, and into St. George's Channel and the Irish Sea. For thirty days he continued his daring operations in the very waters into which Paul Jones had carried the American flag nearly thirty-five years earlier. British merchants and shipping owners in London read with horror of the destruction wrought by this one vessel. Hardly a paper appeared without an account of some

new damage done by the "Argus." Vessels were kept in port to rot at their docks, rather than fall a prey to the terrible Yankee. Rates of insurance went up to ruinous prices, and many companies refused to take any risks whatever so long as the "Argus" remained afloat. But the hue and cry was out after the little vessel; and many a stout British frigate was beating up and down in St. George's Channel, and the chops of the English Channel, in the hopes of falling in with the audacious Yankee, who had presumed to bring home to Englishmen the horrors of war.

It fell to the lot of the brig-sloop "Pelican" to rid the British waters of the "Argus." On the night of the thirteenth of August, the American vessel had fallen in with a British vessel from Oporto, and after a short chase had captured her. The usual result followed. The prisoners with their personal property were taken out of the prize, and the vessel was set afire. But, before the torch was applied, the American sailors had discovered that their prize was laden with wine; and their resolution was not equal to the task of firing the prize without testing the quality of the cargo. Besides treating themselves to rather deep potations, the boarding-crew contrived to smuggle a quantity of the wine into the forecastle of the "Argus." The prize was then fired, and the "Argus" moved away under easy sail. But the light of the blazing ship attracted the attention of the lookout on the "Pelican," and that vessel came down under full sail to discover the cause.

Day was just breaking, and by the gray morning light the British saw an American cruiser making away from the burning hulk of her last prize. The "Pelican" followed in hot pursuit, and was allowed to come alongside, although the fleet American could easily have left her far astern. But Capt. Allen was ready for the conflict; confident of his ship and of his crew, of whose half-intoxicated condition he knew nothing, he felt sure that the coming battle would only add more laurels to the many already won by the "Argus." He had often declared that the "Argus" should never run from any two-master; and now, that the gage of battle was offered, he promptly accepted.

At six o'clock in the morning, the "Pelican" came alongside, and opened the conflict with a broadside from her thirty-two pound carronades. The "Argus" replied with spirit, and a sharp cannonade began.

Four minutes after the battle opened, Capt. Allen was struck by a round shot that cut off his left leg near the thigh. His officers rushed to his side, and strove to bear him to his cabin; but he resisted, saying he would stay on deck and fight his ship as long as any life was left him. With his back to a mast, he gave his orders and cheered on his men for a few minutes longer; then, fainting from the terrible gush of blood from his wound, was carried below. To lose their captain so early in the action, was enough to discourage the crew of the "Argus." Yet the officers left on duty were brave and skilful. Twice the vessel was swung into a raking position, but the gunners failed to seize the advantage. "They seemed to be nodding over their guns," said one of the officers afterward. The enemy, however, showed no signs of nodding. His fire was rapid and well directed, and his vessel manœuvred in a way that showed a practised seaman in command. At last he secured a position under the stern of the "Argus," and lay there, pouring in destructive broadsides, until the Americans struck their flag, — just forty-seven minutes after the opening of the action. The loss on the "Argus" amounted to six killed and seventeen wounded.

No action of the war was so discreditable to the Americans as this. In the loss of the "Chesapeake" and in the loss of the "Essex," there were certain features of the action that redounded greatly to the honor of the defeated party. But in the action between the "Argus" and the "Pelican," the Americans were simply outfought. The vessels were practically equal in size and armament, though the "Pelican" carried a little the heavier metal. It is also stated that the powder used by the "Argus" was bad. It had been taken from one of the prizes, and afterwards proved to be condemned powder of the British Government. In proof of the poor quality of this powder, one of the American officers states that many shot striking the side of the "Pelican" were seen to fall back into the water; while others penetrated the vessel's skin, but did no further damage. All this, however, does not alter the fact that the "Argus" was fairly beaten in a fair fight.

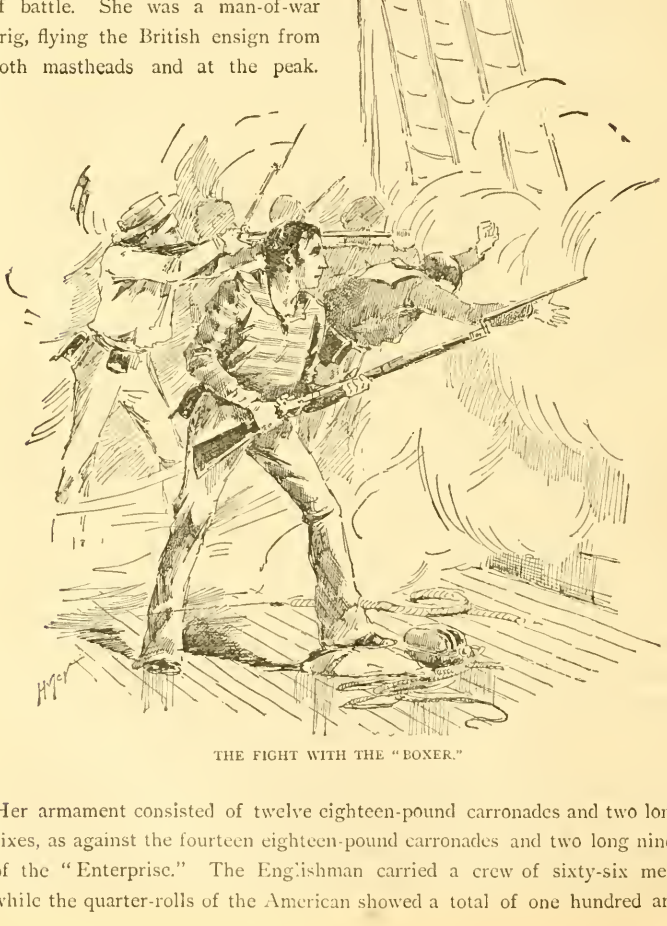
While the British thus snapped up an American man-of-war cruising at their harbors' mouths, the Americans were equally fortunate in capturing a British brig of fourteen guns off the coast of Maine. The captor was the United States brig "Enterprise," a lucky little vessel belonging to a

very unlucky class; for her sister brigs all fell a prey to the enemy. The "Nautilus," it will be remembered, was captured early in the war. The "Vixen" fell into the hands of Sir James Yeo, who was cruising in the West Indies, in the frigate "Southampton;" but this gallant officer reaped but little benefit from his prize, for frigate and brig alike were soon after wrecked on one of the Bahama Islands. The "Siren," late in the war, was captured by the seventy-four-gun ship "Medway," and the loss of the "Argus" has just been chronicled. Of all these brigs, the "Argus" alone was able to fire a gun in her own defence, before being captured; the rest were all forced to yield quietly to immensely superior force.

In the war with Tripoli, the "Enterprise" won the reputation of being a "lucky" craft; and her daring adventures and thrilling escapes during the short naval war with France added to her prestige among sailors. When the war with England broke out, the little brig was put in commission as soon as possible, and assigned to duty along the coast of Maine. She did good service in keeping off privateers and marauding expeditions from Nova Scotia. In the early part of September, 1813, she was cruising near Penguin Point, when she sighted a brig in shore that had the appearance of a hostile war-vessel. The stranger soon settled all doubts as to her character by firing several guns, seemingly for the purpose of recalling her boats from the shore. Then, setting sail with the rapidity of a man-of-war, she bore down upon the American vessel. The "Enterprise," instead of waiting for the enemy, turned out to sea, under easy sail; and her crew were set to work bringing aft a long gun, and mounting it in the cabin, where one of the stern windows had been chopped away to make a port. This action rather alarmed the sailors, who feared that their commander, Lieut. Burrows, whose character was unknown to them, intended to avoid the enemy, and was rigging the long gun for a stern-chaser. An impromptu meeting was held upon the forecastle; and, after much whispered consultation, the people appointed a committee to go aft and tell the commander that the lads were burning to engage the enemy, and were confident of whipping her. The committee started bravely to discharge their commission; but their courage failed them before so mighty a potentate as the commander, and they whispered their message to the first lieutenant, who laughed, and sent word forward

that Mr. Burrows only wanted to get sea-room, and would soon give the jackies all the fighting they desired.

The Americans now had leisure to examine, through their marine-glasses, the vessel which was so boldly following them to the place of battle. She was a man-of-war brig, flying the British ensign from both mastheads and at the peak.



THE FIGHT WITH THE "BOXER."

Her armament consisted of twelve eighteen-pound carronades and two long sixes, as against the fourteen eighteen-pound carronades and two long nines of the "Enterprise." The Englishman carried a crew of sixty-six men, while the quarter-rolls of the American showed a total of one hundred and

two. But in the battle which followed the British fought with such desperate bravery as to almost overcome the odds against them.

For some time the two vessels fought shy of each other, manœuvring for a windward position. Towards three o'clock in the afternoon, the Americans gained this advantage, and at once shortened sail, and edged down toward the enemy. As the ships drew near, a sailor was seen to climb into the rigging of the Englishman, and nail the colors to the mast, giving the lads of the "Enterprise" a hint as to the character of the reception they might expect. As the vessels came within range, both crews cheered lustily, and continued cheering until within pistol-shot, when the two broadsides were let fly at almost exactly the same moment. With the first fire, both commanders fell. Capt. Blyth of the English vessel was almost cut in two by a round shot as he stood on his quarter-deck. He died instantly. Lieut. Burrows was struck by a canister-shot, which inflicted a mortal wound. He refused to be carried below, and was tenderly laid upon the deck, where he remained during the remainder of the battle, cheering on his men, and crying out that the colors of the "Enterprise" should never be struck. The conflict was sharp, but short. For ten minutes only the answering broadsides rung out; then the colors of the British ship were hauled down. She proved to be the sloop-of-war "Boxer," and had suffered severely from the broadsides of the "Enterprise." Several shots had taken effect in her hull, her fore-mast was almost shot away, and several guns were dismounted. Three men beside her captain were killed, and seventeen wounded. But she had not suffered these injuries without inflicting some in return. The "Enterprise" was much cut up aloft. Her fore-mast and main-mast had each been pierced by an eighteen-pound ball. Her captain lay upon the deck, gasping in the last agonies of death, but stoutly protesting that he would not be carried below until he received the sword of the commander of the "Boxer." At last this was brought him; and grasping it he cried, "Now I am satisfied. I die contented."

The two shattered brigs were taken into Portland, where the bodies of the two slain commanders were buried with all the honors of war. The "Enterprise" was repaired, and made one more cruise before the close of the war; but the "Boxer" was found to be forever ruined for a vessel of war, and she was sold into the merchant-service. The fact that she

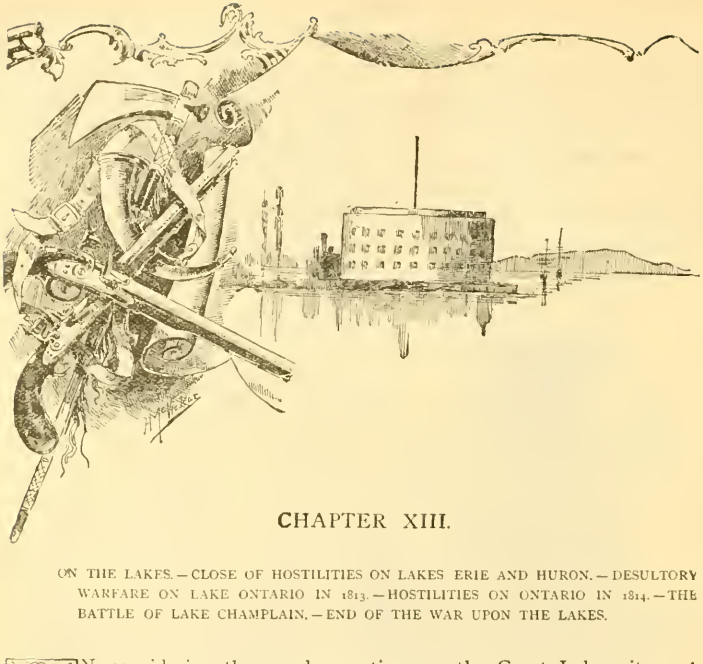
was so greatly injured in so short a time led a London paper, in speaking of the battle, to say, "The fact seems to be but too clearly established, that the Americans have some superior mode of firing; and we cannot be too anxiously employed in discovering to what circumstances that superiority is owing."

This battle practically closed the year's naval events upon the ocean.

THE SURRENDER OF THE "BOXER."

The British privateer "Dart" was captured near Newport by some volunteers from the gunboats stationed at that point. But, with this exception, nothing noteworthy in naval circles occurred during the remainder of the year. Looking back over the annals of the naval operations of 1813, it

is clear that the Americans were the chief sufferers. They had the victories over the "Peacock," "Boxer," and "Highflyer" to boast of; but they had lost the "Chesapeake," "Argus," and "Viper." But, more than this, they had suffered their coast to be so sealed up by British blockaders that many of their best vessels were left to lie idle at their docks. The blockade, too, was growing stricter daily, and the outlook for the future seemed gloomy; yet, as it turned out, in 1814 the Americans regained the ground they had lost the year before.



## CHAPTER XIII.

ON THE LAKES. — CLOSE OF HOSTILITIES ON LAKES ERIE AND HURON. — DESULTORY WARFARE ON LAKE ONTARIO IN 1813. — HOSTILITIES ON ONTARIO IN 1814. — THE BATTLE OF LAKE CHAMPLAIN. — END OF THE WAR UPON THE LAKES.

IN considering the naval operations on the Great Lakes, it must be kept in mind, that winter, which checked but little naval activity on the ocean, locked the great fresh-water seas in an impenetrable barrier of ice, and effectually stopped all further hostilities between the hostile forces afloat. The victory gained by Commodore Perry on Lake Erie in September, 1813, gave the Americans complete command of that lake; and the frozen season soon coming on, prevented any attempts on the part of the enemy to contest the American supremacy. But, indeed, the British showed little ability, throughout the subsequent course of the war, to snatch from the Americans the fruits of the victory at Put-in-Bay. They embarked upon no more offensive expeditions; and the only notable naval contest between the two belligerents during the remainder of the war occurred Aug. 12, 1814, when a party of seventy-five British seamen and marines attempted to cut out three American schooners that lay at the foot of the lake near Fort Erie.

The British forces were at Queenstown, on the Niagara River; but by dint of carrying their boats twenty miles through the woods, then poling down a narrow and shallow stream, with a second portage of eight miles, the adventurers managed to reach Lake Erie. Embarking here, they

ON THE WAY TO LAKE ERIE.

pulled down to the schooners. To the hail of the lookout, they responded, "Provision boats." And, as no British were thought to be on Lake Erie, the response satisfied the officer of the watch. He quickly discovered his mistake, however, when he saw his cable cut, and a party of armed men scrambling over his bulwarks. This first prize, the "Somers," was quickly in the hands of the British, and was soon joined in captivity by the "Ohio," whose people fought bravely but unavailingly against the unexpected foe. While the fighting was going on aboard the vessels, they were drifting down the stream; and, by the time the British victory

was complete, both vessels were beyond the range of Fort Erie's guns, and safe from recapture. This successful enterprise certainly deserves a place as the boldest and best executed cutting-out expedition of the war.

Long before this occurrence, Capt. Arthur Singleton, who had succeeded to Perry's command, despairing of any active service on Lake Erie, had taken his squadron of five vessels into Lake Huron, where the British still held the supremacy. His objective point was the Island of Michilimackinac (Mackinaw), which had been captured by the enemy early in the war. On his way, he stopped and burned the British fort and barracks of St. Joseph. At Mackinaw he was repulsed, with the loss of seventy men; after which he returned to Lake Erie, leaving two vessels, the "Scorpion" and "Tigress," to blockade the Nattagawassa River. The presence of these vessels irritated the British, and they at once set about preparations for their capture. On the night of the 3d of September the "Tigress" was captured after a sharp struggle, which, as the British commanding officer said, "did credit to her officers, who were all severely wounded." At the time of the attack, the "Scorpion" was several miles away, and knew nothing of the misfortune of her consort. Knowing this, the British sent their prisoners ashore, and, hoisting the American flag over the captured vessel, waited patiently for their game to come to them. They were not disappointed in their expectations. On the 5th the "Scorpion" came up, and anchored, unsuspectingly, within two miles of her consort. At early dawn the next morning the "Tigress" weighed anchor; and, with the stars and stripes still flying, dropped down alongside the unsuspecting schooner, poured in a sudden volley, and, instantly boarding, carried the vessel without meeting any resistance.

With these two skirmishes, the war upon Lake Erie and Lake Huron was ended. But on Lake Ontario the naval events, though in no case comparable with Perry's famous victory, were numerous and noteworthy.

In our previous discussion of the progress of the war upon Lake Ontario, we left Commodore Chauncey in winter quarter at Sackett's Harbor, building new ships, and making vigorous efforts to secure sailors to man them. His energy met with its reward; for, when the melting ice left the lake open for navigation in the spring of 1813, the American fleet was ready for active service, while the best vessels belonging to the

British were still in the hands of the carpenters and riggers. The first service performed by the American fleet was aiding Gen. Pike in his attack upon York, where the Americans burned an almost completed twenty-four-gun ship, and captured the ten-gun brig "Gloucester." The land forces who took part in this action were terribly injured by the explosion of the powder-magazine, to which the British had applied a slow-match when they found they could no longer hold their position. This battle was fought April 27, 1813. One month later, the naval forces co-operated with the soldiery in driving the British from Fort George, on the Canada side of the Niagara River, near Lake Ontario. Perry came from Lake Erie to take part in this action, and led a landing party under the fire of the British artillery with that dashing courage which he showed later at the battle of Put-in-Bay. The work of the sailors in this action was cool and effective. Their fire covered the advance of the troops, and silenced more than one of the enemy's guns. "The American ships," writes a British historian, "with their heavy discharges of round and grape, too well succeeded in thinning the British ranks."

But by this time the British fleet was ready for sea, and left Kingston on the 27th of May; while Chauncey was still at the extreme western end of the lake. The enemy determined to make an immediate assault upon Sackett's Harbor, and there destroy the corvette "Gen. Pike," which, if completed, would give Chauncey supremacy upon the lake. Accordingly the fleet under Sir James Lucas Yeo, with a large body of troops under Sir George Prescott, appeared before the harbor on the 29th. Although the forces which rallied to the defence of the village were chiefly raw militia, the British attack was conducted with so little spirit that the defenders won the day; and the enemy retreated, leaving most of his wounded to fall into the hands of the Americans. Yeo then returned to Kingston; and the American fleet came up the lake, and put into Sackett's Harbor, there to remain until the completion of the "Pike" should give Chauncey control of the lake. While the Americans thus remained in port, the British squadron made brief incursions into the lake, capturing a few schooners and breaking up one or two encampments of the land forces of the United States.

Not until the 21st of July did the Americans leave their anchorage. On that day, with the formidable corvette "Pike" at the head of the

line, Chauncey left Sackett's Harbor, and went up to Niagara. Some days later, Yeo took his squadron to sea; and on the 7th of August the two hostile fleets came in sight of one another for the first time. Then followed a season of manœuvring, — of challenging and counter-challenging, of offering battle and of avoiding it, — terminating in so inconclusive an engagement that one is forced to believe that neither commander dared to enter the battle for which both had been so long preparing. The American squadron consisted largely of schooners armed with long guns. In smooth weather these craft were valuable adjuncts to the larger vessels, while in rough weather they were useless. Yeo's squadron was mostly square-rigged, and was therefore equally serviceable in all kinds of weather. It seems likely, therefore, that the Americans strove to bring on the conflict in smooth weather; while the British were determined to wait until a heavy sea should lessen the force of their foes. In this dilemma several days passed away.

On the night of the 7th of August the wind came up to blow, and the rising waves soon demonstrated the uselessness of schooners for purposes of war. At early dawn a fierce gust of wind caused the schooners "Hamilton" and "Scourge" to careen far to leeward. Their heavy guns broke loose; then, crashing down to the submerged beams of the schooners, pulled them still farther over; and, the water rushing in at their hatches, they foundered, carrying with them to the bottom all their officers, and all but sixteen of the men. This loss reduced Chauncey's force to more of an equality with that of the British; yet for two days longer the manœuvring continued, without a shot being fired. On the night of the 10th the two squadrons formed in order of battle, and rapidly approached each other. At eleven o'clock a cannonade was begun by both parties, and continued for about an hour; though the shot did little material damage on either side. At midnight the British, by a quick movement, cut out and captured two American schooners, and sailed away, without suffering any damage.

A month then intervened before the next hostile meeting. In his despatches to his superior authorities, each commander stoutly affirms that he spent the time in chasing the enemy, who refused to give him battle. Whether it was the British or the Americans that avoided the battle, it is impossible to decide; but it seems reasonable to believe, that, had

either party been really determined upon bringing matters to an issue, the other could have been forced into giving battle.

On the 11th of September, the enemies met near the mouth of the Genesee River, and exchanged broadsides. A few of the British vessels were hulled, and, without more ado, hauled off into the shallow waters of Ambert Bay, whither the Americans could not follow them. Then ensued another long period of peace, broken at last by a naval action in York Bay, on the 28th, in which the British were worsted and obliged to fly, though none of their ships were destroyed or captured. On Oct. 2, Chauncey accomplished a really important work, by capturing five British transports, with two hundred and sixty-four men, seven naval and ten army officers. With this achievement, the active work of the Ontario squadron ended for the year, as Chauncey remained blockading Yeo at Kingston, until the approach of winter rendered that precaution no longer necessary.

The navigable season of 1814 opened with the British first upon the lake. The long winter had been employed by the belligerents in adding to their fleets; a work completed first by Yeo, who put out upon the lake on the 3d of May, with eight square-rigged vessels, of which two were new frigates. The Americans had given up their unseaworthy schooners, and had a fleet of eight square-rigged vessels nearly ready, but still lacking the cordage and guns for the three new craft. Yeo thus had the lake to himself for a time, and began a vigorous campaign by an attack upon Oswego, aided by a large body of British troops. Succeeding in this enterprise, he set sail for Sackett's Harbor, and, taking up his position just outside the bar, disposed his vessels for a long and strict blockade. This action was particularly troublesome to the Americans at that time; for their new frigates were just ready for their guns and cables, which could not be brought overland, and the arrival of which by water was seemingly prevented by the blockade. It was in this emergency that the plan, already described, for transporting the great cable for the "Niagara" overland, on the backs of men, was decided upon. Yeo remained on guard at the mouth of the harbor until the 6th of June, then raised the blockade, and disappeared down the lake. For six weeks the Americans continued working on their fleet, to get the ships ready for service. During this time the British gunboat "Black Snake" was brought into the harbor, a

prize to Lieut. Gregory, who had captured it by a sudden assault, with a score of sailors at his back. On the 1st of July, the same officer made a sudden descent upon Presque Isle, where he found a British vessel pierced for fourteen guns on the stocks, ready for launching. The raiders hastily set fire to the ship, and retreated before the enemy could get his forces together

It was July 31 before Chauncey set sail from Sackett's Harbor. He now had under his command a squadron of eight vessels, two of which were frigates, two ship sloops-of-war, and eight brig-sloops of no mean power. Yeo had, to oppose this force, a fleet of no less respectable proportions. Yet, for the remainder of the year, these two squadrons cruised about the lake, or blockaded each other in turn, without once coming to battle. As transports, the vessels were of some service to their respective governments; but, so far as any actual naval operations were concerned, they might as well never have been built. The war closed, leaving the two cautious commanders still waiting for a satisfactory occasion for giving battle.

Such was the course of the naval war upon the Great Lakes; but the thunder of hostile cannon and the cheers of sailors were heard upon yet another sheet of fresh water, before the quarrel between England and the United States was settled. In the north-east corner of New York State, and slightly overlapping the Canada line, lies Lake Champlain, — a picturesque sheet of water, narrow, and dotted with wooded islands. From the northern end of the lake flows the Richelieu River, which follows a straight course through Canada to the St. Lawrence, into which it empties. The long, navigable water-way thus open from Canada to the very heart of New York was to the British a most tempting path for an invading expedition. By the shore of the lake a road wound along; thus smoothing the way for a land force, whose advance might be protected by the fire of the naval force that should proceed up the lake. Naturally, so admirable an international highway early attracted the attention of the military authorities of both belligerents; and, while the British pressed forward their preparations for an invading expedition, the Americans hastened to make such arrangements as should give them control of the lake. Her European wars, however, made so great a demand for soldiers upon Great Britain, that not until 1814 could she send to America a

sufficient force to undertake the invasion of the United States from the north. In the spring of that year, a force of from ten thousand to fifteen thousand troops, including several thousand veterans who had served under Wellington, were massed at Montreal; and in May a move was made by the British to get control of the lake, before sending their invading forces into New York. The British naval force already in the Richelieu River, and available for service, consisted of a brig, two sloops, and twelve or fourteen gunboats. The American flotilla included a large corvette, a schooner, a small sloop, and ten gunboats, or galleys, propelled with oars. Seeing that the British were preparing for active hostilities, the Americans began to build, with all possible speed, a large brig; a move which the enemy promptly met by pushing forward with equal energy the construction of a frigate. While the new vessels were on the stocks, an irregular warfare was carried on by those already in commission. At the opening of the season, the American vessels lay in Otter Creek; and, just as they were ready to leave port, the enemy appeared off the mouth of the creek with a force consisting of the brig "Linnet" and eight or ten galleys. The object of the British was to so obstruct the mouth of the creek that the Americans should be unable to come out. With this end in view, they had brought two sloops laden with stones, which they intended to sink in the narrow channel. But, luckily, the Americans had thrown up earthworks at the mouth of the river; and a party of sailors so worked the guns, that, after much manœuvring, the British were forced to retire without effecting their purpose.

About the middle of August, the Americans launched their new brig, the "Eagle;" and the little squadron put out at once into the lake, under command of Capt. Thomas Macdonough. Eight days later, the British got their new ship, the "Confiance," into the water. She possessed one feature new to American naval architecture, — a furnace in which to heat cannon-balls.

By this time (September, 1814), the invading column of British veterans, eleven thousand strong, had begun its march into New York along the west shore of the lake. Two thousand Americans only could be gathered to dispute their progress; and these, under the command of Brigadier-Gen. Macomb, were gathered at Plattsburg. To this point, accordingly, Macdonough took his fleet, and awaited the coming of the

enemy; knowing that if he could beat back the fleet of the British, their land forces, however powerful, would be forced to cease their advance. The fleet that he commanded consisted of the flag-ship "Saratoga," carrying eight long twenty-four-pounders, six forty-two-pound and twelve thirty-two-pound carronades; the brig "Eagle," carrying eight long eighteens, and twelve thirty-two-pound carronades; schooner "Ticonderoga," with eight long twelve-pounders, four long eighteen-pounders, and five thirty-two-pound carronades; sloop "Preble," with seven long nines; and ten galleys. The commander who ruled over this fleet was a man still in his twenty-ninth year. The successful battles of the War of 1812 were fought by young officers, and the battle of Lake Champlain was no exception to the rule.

The British force which came into battle with Macdonough's fleet was slightly superior. It was headed by the flag-ship "Confiance," a frigate of the class of the United States ship "Constitution," carrying thirty long twenty-fours, a long twenty-four-pounder on a pivot, and six thirty-two or forty-two pound carronades. The other vessels were the "Linnet," a brig mounting sixteen long twelves; and the "Chubb" and "Finch" (captured from the Americans under the names of "Growler" and "Eagle"),—sloops carrying respectively ten eighteen-pound carronades and one long six; and six eighteen-pound carronades, four long sixes, and one short eighteen. To these were added twelve gunboats, with varied armaments, but each slightly heavier than the American craft of the same class.

The 11th of September had been chosen by the British for the combined land and water attack upon Plattsburg. With the movements of the land forces, this narrative will not deal. The brunt of the conflict fell upon the naval forces, and it was the success of the Americans upon the water that turned the faces of the British invaders toward Canada.

The village of Plattsburg stands upon the shore of a broad bay which communicates with Lake Champlain by an opening a mile and a half wide, bounded upon the north by Cumberland Head, and on the south by Crab Island. In this bay, about two miles from the western shore, Macdonough's fleet lay anchored in double line, stretching north and south. The four large vessels were in the front rank, prepared to meet the brunt of the conflict; while the galleys formed a second line in the rear. The morning of the day of battle dawned clear, with a brisk north-

east wind blowing. The British were stirring early, and at daybreak weighed anchor and came down the lake. Across the low-lying isthmus that connected Cumberland Head with the mainland, the Americans could see their adversaries' top-masts as they came down to do battle. At this sight, Macdonough called his officers about him, and, kneeling upon the quarter-deck, besought Divine aid in the conflict so soon to come. When the little group rose from their knees, the leading ship of the enemy was seen swinging round Cumberland Head; and the men went to their quarters to await the fiery trial that all knew was impending.

The position of the American squadron was such that the British were forced to attack "bows on," thus exposing themselves to a raking fire. By means of springs on their cables, the Americans were enabled to keep their broadsides to the enemy, and thus improve, to the fullest, the advantage gained by their position. The British came on gallantly, and were greeted by four shots from the long eighteens of the "Eagle," that had no effect. But, at the sound of the cannon, a young game-cock that was running at large on the "Saratoga" flew upon a gun, flapped his wings, and crowed thrice, with so lusty a note that he was heard far over the waters. The American seamen, thus roused from the painful revery into which the bravest fall before going into action, cheered lustily, and went into the fight, encouraged as only sailors could be by the favorable omen.

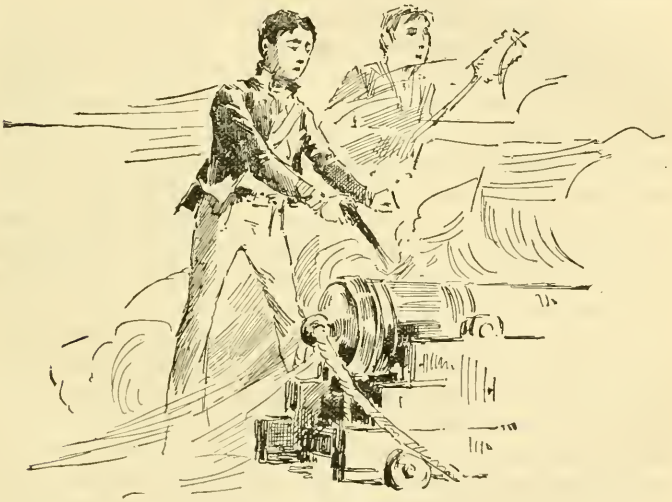
Soon after the defiant game-cock had thus cast down the gage of battle, Macdonough sighted and fired the first shot from one of the long twenty-four pounders of the "Saratoga." The heavy ball crashed into the bow of the "Confiance," and cut its way aft, killing and wounding several men, and demolishing the wheel. Nothing daunted, the British flag-ship came on grandly, making no reply, and seeking only to cast anchor alongside the "Saratoga," and fight it out yard-arm to yard-arm. But the fire of the Americans was such that she could not choose her distance; but after having been badly cut up, with both her port anchors shot away, was forced to anchor at a distance of a quarter of a mile. But her anchor had hardly touched bottom, when she suddenly flashed out a sheet of flames, as her rapid broadsides rung out and her red-hot shot sped over the water toward the American flag-ship. Her first broadside killed or wounded forty of the Americans; while many more were

knocked down by the shock, but sustained no further injury. So great was the carnage, that the hatches were opened, and the dead bodies passed below, that the men might have room to work the guns. Among the slain was Mr. Gamble, the first lieutenant, who was on his knees sighting a gun, when a shot entered the port, split the quoin, drove a great piece of metal against his breast, and stretched him dead upon the deck without breaking his skin. By a singular coincidence, fifteen minutes later a shot from one of the "Saratoga's" guns struck the muzzle of a twenty-four on the "Confiance," and, dismounting it, hurled it against Capt. Downie's groin, killing him instantly without breaking the skin; a black mark about the size of a small plate was the sole visible injury.

In the mean time, the smaller vessels had become engaged, and were fighting with no less courage than the flag-ships. The "Chubb" had early been disabled by a broadside from the "Eagle," and drifted helplessly under the guns of the "Saratoga." After receiving a shot from that vessel, she struck, and was taken possession of by Midshipman Platt, who put off from the flag-ship in an open boat, boarded the prize, and took her into Plattsburg Bay, near the mouth of the Saranac. More than half her people were killed or wounded during the short time she was in the battle. The "Linnet," in the mean time, had engaged the "Eagle," and poured in her broadsides with such effect that the springs on the cables of the American were cut away, and she could no longer bring her broadsides to bear. Her captain therefore cut his cables, and soon gained a position from which he could bring his guns to bear upon the "Confiance." The "Linnet" thereupon dashed in among the American gunboats, and, driving them off, commenced a raking fire upon the "Saratoga." The "Finch," meanwhile, had ranged gallantly up alongside the "Ticonderoga," but was sent out of the fight by two broadsides from the American. She drifted helplessly before the wind, and soon grounded near Crab Island. On the island was a hospital, and an abandoned battery mounting one six-pound gun. Some of the convalescent patients, seeing the enemy's vessel within range, opened fire upon her from the battery, and soon forced her to haul down her flag. Nearly half her crew were killed or wounded. Almost at the same moment, the United States sloop "Preble" was forced out of the fight by the British

gunboats, that pressed so fiercely upon her that she cut her cables and drifted inshore.

The "Ticonderoga" fought a gallant fight throughout. After ridding herself of the "Finch," she had a number of the British gunboats to contend with; and they pressed forward to the attack with a gallantry that showed them to be conscious of the fact, that, if this vessel could be carried, the American line would be turned, and the day won by the English. But the American schooner fought stubbornly. Her gallant



HIRAM PAULDING FIRES THE GUNS.

commander, Lieut. Cassin, walked up and down the taffrail, heedless of the grape and musket-balls that whistled past his head, pointing out to the gunners the spot whereon to train the guns, and directing them to load with canister and bags of bullets when the enemy came too near. The gunners of the schooner were terribly hampered in their work by the lack of matches for the guns; for the vessel was new, and the absence of these very essential articles was unnoticed until too late. The guns of one division were fired throughout the fight by Hiram Paulding,

a sixteen-year-old midshipman, who flashed his pistol at the priming of the guns as soon as aim was taken. When no gun was ready for his services, he rammed a ball into his weapon and discharged it at the enemy. The onslaught of the British was spirited and determined. Often they pressed up within a boat-hook's length of the schooner, only to be beaten back by her merciless fire. Sometimes so few were left alive in the galleys that they could hardly man the oars to pull out of the fight. In this way the "Ticonderoga" kept her enemies at bay while the battle was being decided between the "Saratoga" and the "Confiance."

For it was upon the issue of the conflict between these two ships, that victory or defeat depended. Each had her ally and satellite. Under the stern of the "Saratoga" lay the "Linnet," pouring in raking broadsides. "The "Confiance," in turn, was suffering from the well-directed fire of the "Eagle." The roar of the artillery was unceasing, and dense clouds of gunpowder-smoke hid the warring ships from the eyes of the eager spectators on shore. The "Confiance" was unfortunate in losing her gallant captain early in the action, while Macdonough was spared to fight his ship to the end. His gallantry and activity, however, led him to expose himself fearlessly; and twice he narrowly escaped death. He worked like a common sailor, loading and firing a favorite twenty-four-pound gun; and once, while on his knees, sighting the piece, a shot from the "Confiance" cut in two the spanker-boom, a great piece of which fell heavily upon the captain's head, stretching him senseless upon the deck. He lay motionless for two or three minutes, and his men mourned him as dead; but suddenly his activity returned, and he leaped to his feet, and was soon again in the thick of the fight. In less than five minutes the cry again arose, that the captain was killed. He had been standing at the breach of his favorite cannon, when a round shot took off the head of the captain of the gun, and dashed it with terrific force into the face of Macdonough, who was driven across the deck, and hurled against the bulwarks. He lay an instant, covered with the blood of the slain man; but, hearing his men cry that he was killed, he rushed among them, to cheer them on with his presence.

And, indeed, at this moment the crew of the "Saratoga" needed the presence of their captain to cheer them on to further exertion. The red-hot shot of the "Confiance" had twice set fire to the American ship.

The raking fire from the "Linnet" had dismounted carronades and long guns one by one, until but a single serviceable gun was left in the starboard battery. A too heavy charge dismounted this piece, and threw it down the hatchway, leaving the frigate without a single gun bearing upon the enemy. In such a plight the hearts of the crew might well fail them. But Macdonough was ready for the emergency. He still had his port broadside untouched, and he at once set to work to swing the ship round so that this battery could be brought to bear. An anchor was let fall astern, and the whole ship's company hauled in on the hawser, swinging the ship slowly around. It was a dangerous manœuvre; for, as the ship veered round, her stern was presented to the "Linnet," affording an opportunity for raking, which the gunners on that plucky little vessel immediately improved. But patience and hard pulling carried the day; and gradually the heavy frigate was turned sufficiently for the after gun to bear, and a gun's crew was at once called from the hawsers to open fire. One by one the guns swung into position, and soon the whole broadside opened with a roar.

Meanwhile the "Confiance" had attempted the same manœuvre. But her anchors were badly placed; and, though her people worked gallantly, they failed to get the ship round. She bore for some time the effective fire from the "Saratoga's" fresh broadside, but, finding that she could in no way return the fire, struck her flag, two hours and a quarter after the battle commenced. Beyond giving a hasty cheer, the people of the "Saratoga" paid little attention to the surrender of their chief enemy, but instantly turned their guns upon the "Linnet." In this combat the "Eagle" could take no part, and the thunder of her guns died away. Farther down the bay, the "Ticonderoga" had just driven away the last of the British galleys; so that the "Linnet" now alone upheld the cause of the enemy. She was terribly outmatched by her heavier foe, but her gallant captain Pring kept up a desperate defence. Her masts and rigging were hopelessly shattered; and no course was open to her, save to surrender, or fight a hopeless fight. Capt. Pring sent off a lieutenant, in an open boat, to ascertain the condition of the "Confiance." The officer returned with the report that Capt. Downie was killed, and the frigate terribly cut up; and as by this time the water, pouring in the shot-holes in the "Linnet's" hull, had risen a foot above the lower deck, her flag

was hauled down, and the battle ended in a decisive triumph for the Americans.

Terrible was the carnage, and many and strange the incidents, of this most stubbornly contested naval battle. All of the prizes were in a sinking condition. In the hull of the "Confiance" were a hundred and five shot-holes, while the "Saratoga" was pierced by fifty-five. Not a mast that would bear canvas was left standing in the British fleet; those of the flag-ship were splintered like bundles of matches, and the sails torn to rags. On most of the enemy's vessels, more than half of the crews were killed or wounded. The loss on the British side probably aggregated three hundred. Midshipman William Lee of the "Confiance" wrote home after the battle, "The havoc on both sides was dreadful. I don't think there are more than five of our men, out of three hundred, but what are killed or wounded. Never was a shower of hail so thick as the shot whistling about our ears. Were you to see my jacket, waistcoat, and trousers, you would be astonished to know how I escaped as I did; for they are literally torn all to rags with shot and splinters. The upper part of my hat was also shot away. There is one of the marines who was in the Trafalgar action with Lord Nelson, who says it was a mere flea-bite in comparison with this."

The Americans, though victorious, had suffered greatly. Their loss amounted to about two hundred men. The "Saratoga" had been cut up beyond the possibility of repair. Her decks were covered with dead and dying. The shot of the enemy wrought terrible havoc in the ranks of the American officers. Lieut. Stansbury of the "Ticonderoga" suddenly disappeared in the midst of the action; nor could any trace of him be found, until, two days later, his body, cut nearly in two by a round shot, rose from the waters of the lake. Lieut. Vallette of the "Saratoga" was knocked down by the head of a sailor, sent flying by a cannon-ball. Some minutes later he was standing on a shot-box giving orders, when a shot took the box from beneath his feet, throwing him heavily upon the deck. Mr. Brum, the master, a veteran man-o'-war's man, was struck by a huge splinter, which knocked him down, and actually stripped every rag of clothing from his body. He was thought to be dead, but soon re-appeared at his post, with a strip of canvas about his waist, and fought bravely until the end of the action. Some days before the battle, a gentleman

of Oswego gave one of the sailors a glazed tarpaulin hat, of the kind then worn by seamen. A week later the sailor re-appeared, and, handing him the hat with a semi-circular cut in the crown and brim, made while it was on his head by a cannon-shot, remarked calmly, "Look here, Mr. Sloane, how the damned John Bulls have spoiled my hat!"

The last British flag having been hauled down, an officer was sent to take possession of the "Confiance." In walking along her gun-deck, he accidentally ran against a ratline, by which one of her starboard guns was discharged. At this sound, the British galleys and gunboats, which had been lying quietly with their ensigns down, got out oars and moved off up the lake. The Americans had no vessels fit for pursuing them, and they were allowed to escape. In the afternoon the British officers came to the American flag-ship to complete the surrender. Macdonough met them courteously; and, on their offering their swords, put them back, saying, "Gentlemen, your gallant conduct makes you worthy to wear your weapons. Return them to their scabbards." By sundown the surrender was complete, and Macdonough sent off to the Secretary of the Navy a despatch, saying, "*Sir*,—The Almighty has been pleased to grant us a signal victory on Lake Champlain, in the capture of one frigate, one brig, and two sloops-of-war of the enemy."

Some days later, the captured ships, being beyond repair, were taken to the head of the lake, and scuttled. Some of the guns were found to be still loaded; and, in drawing the charges, one gun was found with a canvas bag containing two round shot rammed home, and wadded, without any powder; another gun contained two cartridges and no shot; and a third had a wad rammed down before the powder, thus effectually preventing the discharge of the piece. The American gunners were not altogether guiltless of carelessness of this sort. Their chief error lay in ramming down so many shot upon the powder that the force of the explosion barely carried the missiles to the enemy. In proof of this, the side of the "Confiance" was thickly dotted with round shot, which had struck into, but failed to penetrate, the wood.

The result of this victory was immediate and gratifying. The land forces of the British, thus deprived of their naval auxiliaries, turned about, and retreated to Canada, abandoning forever their projected invasion. New York was thus saved by Macdonough's skill and bravery. Yet the

fame he won by his victory was not nearly proportionate to the naval ability he showed, and the service he had rendered to his country. Before the popular adulation of Perry, Macdonough sinks into second place. One historian only gives him the pre-eminence that is undoubtedly his due. Says Mr. Theodore Roosevelt, in his admirable history, "The Naval War of 1812," "But Macdonough in this battle won a higher fame than any other commander of the war, British or American. He had a decidedly superior force to contend against, and it was solely owing to his foresight and resource that we won the victory. He forced the British to engage at a disadvantage by his excellent choice of position, and he prepared beforehand for every possible contingency. His personal prowess had already been shown at the cost of the rovers of Tripoli, and in this action he helped fight the guns as ably as the best sailor. His skill, seamanship, quick eye, readiness of resource, and indomitable pluck are beyond all praise. Down to the time of the civil war, he is the greatest figure in our naval history. A thoroughly religious man, he was as generous and humane as he was skilful and brave. One of the greatest of our sea captains, he has left a stainless name behind him."

## CHAPTER XIV.

ON THE OCEAN.—THE WORK OF THE SLOOPS-OF-WAR.—LOSS OF THE "FROLIC."—FRUITLESS CRUISE OF THE "ADAMS."—THE "PEACOCK" TAKES THE "EPERVIER."—THE CRUISE OF THE "WASP."—SHE CAPTURES THE "REINDEER."—SINKS THE "AVON."—MYSTERIOUS END OF THE "WASP."

THE opening of the year 1814 found the American coast still rigidly blockaded by the British men-of-war. Two or three of the enemy lay off the mouth of every considerable harbor, and were not to be driven from their post by the icy winds and storms of midwinter on the American coast. It was almost impossible for any American vessel to escape to sea, and a matter of almost equal difficulty for such vessels as were out to get into a home port. The frigate "President" had put to sea early in December, 1813, and after a cruise of eight weeks, during which the traditional ill-luck of the ship pursued her remorselessly, managed to dash into New York Harbor past the blockading squadron. At Boston the blockade was broken by the "Constitution." She left port on the 1st of January, ran off to the southward, and cruised

for some weeks in the West Indies. Here she captured the British man-of-war schooner "Pictou," fourteen guns, and several merchant-vessels. She also fell in with the British thirty-six-gun frigate "Pique," which fled, and escaped pursuit by cutting through a narrow channel during a dark and squally night. The "Constitution" then returned to the coast of the United States, and narrowly escaped falling into the clutches of two British frigates. She managed to gain the shelter of Marblehead Harbor, and there remained until the latter part of the year.

But, while the larger vessels were thus accomplishing little or nothing, two or three small sloops-of-war, of a class newly built, slipped through the enemy's lines, and, gaining the open sea, fought one or two notable actions. Of these, the first vessel to get to sea was the new sloop-of-war "Frolic;" but her career was short and inglorious, for she had been at sea but a few weeks when she fell in with the enemy's frigate "Orpheus" and the schooner "Shelburne." A chase ensued, in which the American vessel threw overboard her guns and anchors, and started the water; but to no avail, for she was overhauled, and forced to surrender. Her service afloat was limited to the destruction of a Carthagenian privateer, which sunk before her guns, carrying down nearly a hundred men.

The "Adams," a vessel that had suffered many vicissitudes, — having been built for a frigate, then cut down to a sloop-of-war, and finally been sawed asunder and converted into a corvette, — put to sea on the 18th of January, under the command of Capt. Charles Morris, formerly of the "Constitution." She laid her course straight to the eastward, and for some time cruised off the western coast of Africa and the Canary Isles. She met with but little success in this region, capturing only three brigs, — the cargo of one of which consisted of wine and fruit; and the second, of palm-oil and ivory. Abandoning the African coast, the corvette turned westward along the equator, and made for the West Indies. A large Indiaman fell in her way, and was brought to; but, before the Americans could take possession of their prize, a British fleet of twenty-five sail, with two men-of-war, hove in sight, and the "Adams" was forced to seek safety in flight. She put into Savannah for provisions and water, but, hearing that the enemy was in force near by, worked out to sea, and made sail for another cruise. Capt. Morris took up a position on the limits of the Gulf Stream, near the Florida coast, in the expectation of

cutting out an Indiaman from some passing convoy. The expected fleet soon came, but was under the protection of a seventy-four, two frigates, and three brigs, — a force sufficient to keep at bay the most audacious of corvettes. Morris hung about the convoy for two days, but saw no chance of eluding the watchful guards. He then crossed the Atlantic to the coast of Ireland. Here the "Adams" narrowly escaped capture; for she was sighted by a frigate, which gave chase, and would have overhauled her, had not the Americans thrown overboard some small cannon, and cut away their anchors. Thus lightened, the corvette sped away, and soon left her pursuers behind.

Continued ill-fortune now reduced the spirits of the sailors of the "Adams" to very low ebb. They were forced to struggle unceasingly against the fierce gales which in winter sweep the Atlantic. Their stock of food and water was giving out; and, to add to their distress, scurvy, the sailors' worst enemy, began to show itself in the ship. They had coldly run into the very waters in which the "Argus" had won so rich a reward, yet not a sail gladdened the eyes of the lookout on the "Adams." It was then with great disappointment that the jackies saw the prow of the corvette turned homeward, after a cruise that would bring them neither honor nor prize-money. The passage homeward was quickly made, and on the 16th of August the vessel was in soundings off the coast of Maine. Night fell, with a dense fog concealing all landmarks from view. Through the darkness the corvette sped on at a pace of eleven miles an hour, until, just as day was breaking, the cry of "Breakers ahead!" was followed by a heavy blow, indicating that the ship had struck. The force of the blow had not been sufficient to stave in the bottom, — a fortunate fact, for the hold was full of prisoners. Nevertheless, she was hard and fast aground, on a ledge of rock that lifted her bow six feet above her stern. Morris, who had rushed upon deck at the first alarm, was unable to make out the ship's position, and feared that they were on Cashes Ledge, a reef so far from the land that it would have been impossible to save in the boats more than half the crew. He had determined, however, to instantly lower the boats and send them off in search of land, when a gust of wind, blowing away the fog, showed a beetling cliff not a hundred yards away. Rugged and inhospitable as was the coast thus exposed, it was better than an expanse of ocean; and at once Morris set to work landing his

prisoners, and the sick, of whom the "Adams" had nearly sixty. With spare sails, tents were put up on the beach; and, stores having been landed, the comfort of all was assured, in case the ship should go to pieces. What the desolate shore was to which they were thus forced to turn for shelter, no one knew.

All hands now turned to at the capstan, in the hopes of getting the vessel off; and about noon, the tide having reached its flood, she gradually slid off the ledge into deep water. After trying the pumps, to see if any serious leak had been started, the difficult task of taking the ship out of the labyrinth of reefs in which she lay was begun. For more than two miles their course lay through a narrow and tortuous channel, bordered on either side with jagged reefs; but the corvette safely threaded her way between the rocks, and soon lay floating in deep water. The next morning the fog blew away; and the voyagers discovered to their astonishment that they were off Mount Desert, instead of near Portsmouth as they had expected.

To return into the cluster of reefs after the little colony of invalids and prisoners that had been left behind, would have been mere folly: so sending two fishing-boats to search out the shore party, and carry them to the nearest village, the "Adams" continued her course, intending to put into the Penobscot River. While making for this point, a sail was sighted, which proved to be the British brig-sloop "Rifleman." The corvette gave chase, but the Englishman kept well in the offing; and, as the condition of the American crew was such that to lead them into action would have been imprudent, Morris abandoned the pursuit, and, putting into the Penobscot, dropped anchor off Hampden. Here, for the present, we will leave the "Adams."

The "Peacock" — a second of the new sloops-of-war, bearing the name of a captured British vessel — put out from New York in March, and made her way to the southward, selecting as her cruising station the waters off the coast of Florida. For some time it seemed that the exertions of the sailors were to be of no avail. Not a sail was to be seen, and the chances for prize-money seemed to be small indeed. But on the 29th of March three merchant-vessels were made out in the offing; while a heavy-built, square-rigged, trim-looking craft that hovered about them was evidently a man-of-war. The strangers seemed to have sighted the

American vessel; for the merchantmen were seen to hastily haul up and run off to the north-east, while the man-of-war edged away for the American ship.

The stranger was His British Majesty's brig sloop-of-war "Epervier," of eighteen guns, and carrying a crew of one hundred and twenty-eight men. The "Peacock" was a ship-sloop of twenty-two guns, with a crew of one hundred and sixty-six men. The advantage, therefore, lay with the Americans; but, in the battle that ensued, the damage they inflicted upon the enemy was out of any proportion to their excess of strength.

The two ships bore down gallantly upon each other, and at a little after ten in the morning passed, exchanging heavy broadsides. The shot of each took effect in the rigging; but the "Peacock" suffered the more, having her foreyard totally disabled, — an injury that compelled her to run large during the rest of the action, and forego all attempts at manœuvring. The two vessels having passed each other, the "Epervier" eased off, and returned to the fight, running on a parallel course with the American ship. The interchange of broadsides then became very rapid; but the British marksmanship was poor, and few of their shot took effect. The "Epervier," on the contrary, suffered severely from the American fire, which took effect in her hull, dismounting several guns, and so injuring the brig that a British naval officer, writing of the action some years later, said, "The most disgraceful part of the affair was that our ship was cut to pieces, and the enemy hardly scratched."

The injury aloft which both vessels sustained caused the battle to take on the character of an action at long range. Under such conditions, the victory was assured to the side showing the best gunnery. For a moment only did it seem that the vessels were likely to come to close quarters, and the English captain seized that occasion to call up his boarders. But they refused, saying, "She's too heavy for us." And a few minutes later the Englishman hauled down his flag, having lost nine killed or mortally wounded, and fourteen wounded. The Americans had suffered but little; only two men being injured, and these but slightly. The shot of the enemy had passed through the rigging of the "Peacock," while the "Epervier" had been hulled forty-five times.

The "Epervier" proved to be a valuable prize. In her hold specie to the amount of one hundred and eighteen thousand dollars was found;

and, when the brig was sold to the United States Government, she brought fifty-five thousand dollars: so that the prize-money won by that action kept the sailors in good-humor for many months to come. But, before the prize could be safely carried into an American port, she had a gantlet to run, in which she narrowly escaped capture. After the wreck of battle had been cleared away, the brig and her captor made for Savannah, but were sighted and chased by two British frigates. The "Peacock," in the hope of drawing away the pursuers, left her prize, and headed out to sea. One frigate only followed her, and the other pressed on hotly after the "Epervier," which, to avoid capture, was forced to run into shallow water, whither the heavy frigate could not follow her. But she was not to escape so easily; for the boats of the frigate were lowered, filled with armed men, and set out in pursuit of the brig, which moved but slowly before the light breeze then blowing. The boats soon overhauled the fugitive, and escape seemed hopeless; for the "Epervier" was manned by a prize-crew of only sixteen men. But Lieut. Nicholson, who was in command, determined to try the effect of bluster. Accordingly he leaped upon the taffrail, with a speaking-trumpet in his hand, and shouted out orders as if calling a huge crew to quarters. The British, who were within easy range, stopped their advance, and, fearing a destructive broadside from the brig's guns, turned and fled precipitately. The "Epervier" continued her course, and reached Savannah in safety on the 1st of May. The "Peacock" reached the same port four days later.

At the moment when the captured "Epervier," flying the stars and stripes, was proudly making her way up the harbor of Savannah amid the plaudits of the people of the little city, there sailed from Portsmouth, N.H., a vessel that was destined to fight a good fight for the honor of that starry banner; and, after winning a glorious victory, to disappear forever from the face of the ocean, carrying to some unknown grave a crew of as brave hearts as ever beat under uniforms of navy blue.

This was the new sloop of war "Wasp," named after the gallant little craft that had been taken by the British after her capture of the "Frolic." She was a stanch three-master, carrying eleven guns to a broadside. Her crew was purely American, not a foreigner among them; but all trained seamen from the seaboard villages and towns of New England, — the homes at that time of probably the hardiest seafaring population in the world.

Capt. Blakely, who commanded the vessel, had been attached to the "Enterprise" for some time, but had been ordered to the command of the "Wasp" a few days before the former vessel fought her successful battle with the "Boxer." Blakely, while in command of the "Enterprise," had greatly desired to meet an enemy worthy of his metal. Great, then, was his chagrin, when the "Enterprise," two weeks after he quitted her, fought her gallant battle. In a letter written in January, 1814, he says, "I shall ever view as one of the most unfortunate events of my life having quitted the 'Enterprise' at the moment I did. Had I remained in her a fortnight longer, my name might have been classed with those who stand so high. I cannot but consider it a mortifying circumstance that I left her but a few days before she fell in with the only enemy upon this station with which she could have creditably contended. I confess I felt heartily glad when I received my order to take command of the 'Wasp,' conceiving that there was no hope of doing any thing in the 'Enterprise.' But when I heard of the contest of the latter ship, and witnessed the great delay in the equipment of the former, I had no cause to congratulate myself. The 'Peacock' has ere this spread her plumage to the winds, and the 'Frolic' will soon take her revels on the ocean; but the 'Wasp' will, I fear, remain for some time a dull, harmless drone in the waters of her country."

Notwithstanding his impatience, Blakely was forced to endure the restraints of Portsmouth navy-yard for nearly three months, while the "Wasp" was fitting out; but when she did finally get to sea, on May 1, 1814, she proved herself to be far from a "dull, harmless drone." Slipping unobserved through the British blockading line, the "Wasp" made straight for the European coast before a fresh wind, and was soon cruising in the chops of the English channel, where the "Argus" had won her laurels and met with her defeat. Many English merchantmen were captured and burned, and the terror that spread in English shipping circles recalled the days of the "Argus."

At daylight on the 28th of June, the "Wasp" sighted two merchantmen, and straightway gave chase. Soon a third vessel was discovered on the weather-beam; and, abandoning the vessels first sighted, the American bore down upon the stranger. She proved to be the "Reindeer," a British brig-sloop of eighteen guns, carrying a crew of one hundred and eighteen men. Although the British vessel was by no means a match

in weight of metal for the "Wasp," her captain, William Manners, brought her into action with a cool gallantry which well justified his reputation as one of the bravest men in the British navy.

At ten o'clock in the morning the ships were near enough to each other to exchange signals, but several hours were spent in manœuvring for the weather-gage; so that it was not until after three in the afternoon that the action fairly opened. The day was admirably suitable for a naval battle. Light clouds floated across the sky, and the gentle breeze that was blowing had sufficient strength to propel the ships without careening them. The surface of the ocean was unusually calm for that quarter, in which a rather choppy sea is usually running. Before the light breeze the "Wasp" came down upon her foe, bows on, with her decks cleared for action, and the men at their quarters. On the top-gallant forecastle of the "Reindeer" was mounted a twelve-pound carronade, and the action was opened by the discharge of this piece. In the position she then held, the "Wasp" was unable to reply; and her crew had to bear five effective shots from this gun without being able to fire a shot in return, — an ordeal that less well-disciplined crews might not have endured. For nine minutes the Americans returned not a shot; but then the "Wasp" luffed up, firing the guns from aft forward as they bore. The two ships were now lying broadside to broadside, not twenty yards apart, and every shot told. For ten minutes this position was held, and the two crews worked like Furies in loading and firing the great guns. The roar of the cannon was incessant, and the recoil of the heavy explosions deadened what little way the ships had on when fire was opened. Capt. Manners was too old an officer not to know, that, in an artillery duel of that kind, the victory would surely rest with the side that carried the heaviest guns: so he ran his vessel aboard the "Wasp" on the starboard quarter, intending to board and carry the the day with the stubborn, dashing gallantry shown by British seamen when once led to an enemy's deck. At the ringing notes of the bugle, calling up the boarders, the British gathered aft, their faces begrimed with gunpowder, their arms bare, and their keen cutlasses firmly clutched in their strong right hands. The Americans took the alarm at once, and crowded forward to repel the enemy. The marines, whose hard duty it is in long-range fighting to stand with military impassiveness, drawn up in line on deck, while the shot whistle by them, and now and then cut great gaps in

their straight lines, — the marines came aft, with their muskets loaded and bayonets fixed. Before them were sailors with sharp-pointed boarding-pikes, ready to receive the enemy should he come aboard; while close under the bulwarks were grouped the boarders, ready with cutlass and pistol to beat back the flood of men that should come pouring over the side. The grating of the ships' sides told that the vessels were touching; and the next instant

THE CAPTAIN OF THE "REINDEER."

the burly British seamen, looming up like giants, as they dashed through the dense murkiness of the powder-smoke, were among the Americans, cutting and firing right and left. From the deck of the "Reindeer" the marines kept up a constant fire of musketry, to which the sea-soldiers of the "Wasp" responded vigorously. Marksmen posted in the tops of each vessel picked off men from their enemy's decks, choosing generally the officers.

Sharp and bloody though the British attack was, the boarders could make no way against the stubborn stand of the Americans. Capt. Manners, seeing his men beaten back, sprang forward to rally them. He was desperately wounded. A gun-shot had passed through his thighs, and a grape-shot had cut across the calves of his legs; but, maimed and bleeding to death as he was, he leaped into the rigging, and, cheering and waving his sword, called to his men to follow him to the decks of the Yankee. The Britons rallied nobly under the encouragement of their brave captain, and again advanced to the assault. But the figure of the daring officer, as he stood thus before his men, waving his sword and calling on them to come on, caught the eye of one of the men in the "Wasp's" main-top; and the next instant a ball crashed into the captain's brain, and he fell heavily to the deck, with his dying eyes turned upwards toward the flag in whose service he had given his life.

Seeing the British captain fall and the men waver, Capt. Blakely with a cheer called up the boarders of the "Wasp;" and in an instant a stream of shouting sailors, cutlass in hand, was pouring over the hammock-nettings, and driving the foe backward on his own decks. The British still fought stubbornly; but their numbers were terribly thinned, and their officers had fallen one by one, until now the captain's clerk was the highest officer left. Seeing his men falling back before the resistless torrent of boarders, this gentleman finally struck the flag; and the battle ended, twenty-seven minutes after the "Reindeer" had fired the opening gun, and eighteen after the "Wasp" had responded.

The execution and damage done on the "Reindeer" by the "Wasp's" shot were appalling. Of her crew of one hundred and eighteen men, thirty-three were killed or fatally wounded, and thirty-four were wounded. The havoc wrought among her officers has already been mentioned. Evidence of the accuracy and skill of the American gunners was to be seen in the fact that the brig was completely cut to pieces in the line of her ports. Her decks were swept clean of boats, spars, and rigging. Her masts were badly shattered, and her fore-mast soon went by the board. The "Wasp" had suffered severely, but was in much better condition than her captured adversary. Eleven of her crew were killed or mortally wounded, and fifteen were wounded severely or slightly. She had been hulled by six round and many grape shot, and her fore-mast had

been cut by a twenty-four-pound shot. A few hours' work cleared from her decks all trace of the bloody fight, and she was in condition for another action. But it would have been folly to try to get the crippled "Reindeer" to port from that region, swarming with British cruisers: so Capt. Blakely took the prisoners on the "Wasp," put a few of the wounded on a neutral vessel that happened to pass, and, burning the

THE END OF THE "REINDEER."

prize, made his way to the harbor of L'Orient. He had fought a brave fight, and come out victor after a desperate contest. But, though defeated, the plucky British might well boast of the gallant manner in which they engaged an enemy so much their superior in strength. History nowhere records a more gallant death than that of the British captain, who fell leading his men in a dashing but vain attempt to retrieve the day by boarding. In its manœuvring, in the courage and discipline of the crews, and in the gallantry of the two captains, the action of the "Wasp" and the "Reindeer" may well go down to history as a model naval duel of the age of sails.

The "Wasp" remained in port for several weeks, occupying the time in refitting, and filling the gaps in her crew by enlistment from the American privateers which then were to be seen occasionally in every port of the world. She then put out to sea, and soon fell in with a convoy of ten British merchantmen, under the protection of the seventy-four "Armada." Though he had no intention of giving battle to the line-of-battle ship, Blakely determined to capture one of the merchantmen; and to this end the "Wasp" hung upon the skirts of the convoy, making rapid dashes now at one vessel, then at another, and keeping the seventy-four in constant anxiety. Finally the swift little cruiser actually succeeded in capturing one of the vessels, and escaping before the heavy seventy-four could get to the scene of the conflict. The prize proved to be a valuable one, for she was laden with iron and brass cannon and military stores.

Towards nightfall of the same day, Sept. 1, 1814, four more sail were sighted; and the "Wasp" at once made off in chase of the most weatherly. At eight o'clock the "Wasp" had gained so rapidly upon the chase, that the latter began firing with her stern chaser, and soon after opened with one of her lee guns. All the time the enemy kept up a vigorous signalling with rockets, lanterns, and guns. By half-past nine the "Wasp" was within hailing-distance, and an officer posted on the bow hailed the stranger several times; but as she returned no satisfactory answer, and refused to heave to, the "Wasp" opened upon her with a twelve-pound carronade, and soon after poured a broadside into her quarter. The two ships ploughed through the black water, under full sail, side by side. The Americans had no idea of the identity of their assailant, but, by the flashes of the guns, could see that she was a heavy brig. Her ports gleamed brightly with battle-lanterns; and the crowds of sailors in the tops, and the regularity of her fire, showed that she was a man-of-war with a well-disciplined crew, and no mere marauding privateer. For a time this running fight continued at such short range that the only American injured was struck by a wad from the enemy's cannon. The British gunners were poor marksmen, and the "Wasp" suffered but little; but it was evident that the American fire was taking effect, for gun after gun on the enemy was silenced. At ten o'clock the Americans, receiving no response to their carronade, stopped firing; and Capt. Blakely,

seizing a speaking-trumpet, shouted across the water, "Have you struck?" No answer came, and the enemy began a feeble fire. The "Wasp" let fly another broadside, and Blakely repeated the question. This time an affirmative response came through the darkness; and the "Wasp" stopped firing, and made preparations to take possession of her prize. Just as the boat was being lowered from the davits, the lookout's cry of "Sail, ho!" checked the proceedings. Through the black night a cloud of canvas could be seen far astern, denoting the presence of another ship, probably an enemy. The drums of the "Wasp" beat fiercely; and the men trooped back to their quarters, ready for a second battle. But in the mean time two more sail hove in sight, and there remained to the "Wasp" nothing but flight. She accordingly made off into the darkness, receiving one broadside from one of the newly arrived men-of-war as she departed. So suddenly was she forced to fly, that she was unable to learn the name and condition of the vessel she had forced to surrender.

It became known in the United States later that the "Wasp's" adversary in the battle in the darkness was the British sloop-of-war "Avon," of eighteen guns. She was badly cut up by the fire of the American gunners, losing her main-mast early in the action. At the time she surrendered, she was in a sinking condition; and, had it not been for the timely arrival of the brig-sloop "Castilian" and the "Tartarus," both British, the crew of the "Avon" would have been prisoners on the "Wasp," or carried to the bottom in the shattered hulk of their own ship. The loss on the "Avon' was ten killed and thirty-two wounded, while on the "Wasp" but three men were injured.

Of all this the gallant Capt. Blakely was ignorant; and, indeed, it is probable that he never knew with whom he had fought his last battle. For the subsequent history of the "Wasp" is more tragic in its unfathomable mystery than is the fate of the bravest ship ever sent to the bottom by the broadsides of an enemy. What was the end of the "Wasp," and where her bones now lie, no one knows. For some little time after her battle with the "Avon," her movements can be traced. Sept. 12, she captured the British brig "Three Brothers," and scuttled her; two days later, the brig "Bacchus" met the same fate at her hands. Sept. 21, she took the brig "Atlanta," eight guns; and, this being a valuable prize, Midshipman Geisinger of the "Wasp" was put on board, and took her

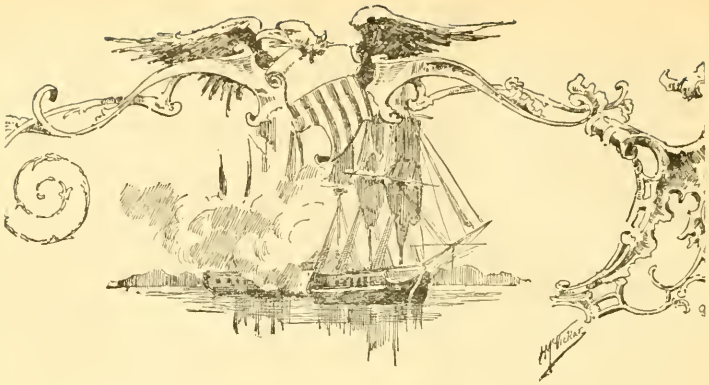
safely to Savannah. He brought the last news that was heard of the ill-fated cruiser for many years. Months passed, and lengthened into years; and still the "Wasp" came not into port, nor could any trace of her whereabouts be found. As time passed on, the attempts to account for her delay changed into theories as to the cause of her total disappearance. All sorts of rumors were afloat. According to one account, the ship was wrecked on the African coast, and her gallant lads were ending their weary lives as slaves to the turbaned Moors of Barbary. Another theory was based on the rumor that an English frigate went into Cadiz much crippled, and with her crew severely injured, and reported that she had been engaged with a heavy American corvette, which had so suddenly disappeared that she was thought to have sunk with all on board. But, as time passed on, the end of the "Wasp" was forgotten by all save a few whose hearts ached for some of the gallant lads thus blotted from the face of the earth.

Years after, the fate of the daring cruiser was again brought into remembrance by fresh news curiously found. When the officers and crew of the "Essex," after that vessel's gallant battle with the "Phœbe" and "Cherub," were sent to the United States under parole, two officers remained at Valparaiso, to give testimony before the prize-court. These gentlemen were Lieut. McKnight, and Mr. Lyman a master's mate. After going to Brazil in the "Phœbe," the two officers took passage in a Swedish brig bound for England. Months passed; and, nothing being heard from them, their friends became alarmed for their safety. In that time, before the day of the telegraph and steam transportation, many things might have easily detained the two officers for a year or more, and nothing be heard of them. But, when two years had passed, inquiries began to be made as to their fate, both by their friends and the naval authorities. The first step was to find the vessel upon which they had left Brazil. This was a work of time; so that it was many years after the disappearance of the officers when the brig was found lying at a London dock. She was the brig "Adonis," and the master proved to be the same who had commanded her when the two officers had taken passage. He readily recalled the circumstance, but claimed that the two passengers had left him in mid-ocean to go aboard an American man-of-war; and in proof of this he brought out the log-book, and, turning back to the year 1814, pointed out the following entries: —

"Aug. 23. — Left Rio de Janeiro; Stephen Decatur McKnight and James Lyman, passengers for England.

"Oct. 9. — At eight o'clock in the morning discovered a strange sail giving chase to us, and fired several guns; she gaining very fast. At half-past ten o'clock hove to, and was boarded by an officer dressed in an English doctor's uniform; the vessel also hoisted an English ensign. The officer proceeded to examine my ship's papers, etc., likewise the letter-bags, and took from one of them a letter to the victualling office, London. Finding I had two American officers as passengers, he immediately left the ship, and went on board the sloop-of-war. He shortly after returned, took the American gentlemen with him, and went a second time on board the ship. In about half an hour he returned, with Messrs. McKnight and Lyman; and they informed me that the vessel was the United States sloop-of-war 'Wasp,' commanded by Capt. Blakely, or Blake, last from France, where she had refitted; had lately sunk the 'Reindeer,' English sloop-of-war, and another vessel, which sunk without their being able to save a single person, or learn the vessel's name; that Messrs. McKnight and Lyman had now determined to leave me and go on board the 'Wasp;' paid me their passage in dollars, at 5*s.* 9*d.*; and, having taken their luggage on board, the 'Wasp' made sail to the southward. Shortly after they had left, I discovered that Lieut. McKnight had left his writing-desk behind; and I immediately made signal for the 'Wasp' to return, and stood towards her. They, observing my signal, stood back, came alongside, and sent their boat on board for the writing-desk; after which they sent me a log-line and some other presents, and made all sail in a direction for the line, and, I have reason to suppose, for the convoy that passed on Thursday previous."

And so the "Wasp," with her ill-fated crew thus re-enforced, passed forever from the sight of man. What was her course after leaving the "Adonis," none may ever know. Whether some chance spark, touching the deadly stores of her magazine, sent vessel and crew to a sudden but merciful death; or whether, after gallantly battling with some fierce tropical hurricane, she drifted about the trackless ocean a helpless hulk, with a slowly dying crew, carried hither and yon before the winds and the currents, until her timbers, rotting asunder, gave a watery sepulchre to her crew of lifeless bodies, must remain a mystery until the day when the sea shall give up its dead. But, until that day comes, the gallant deeds done by vessel and crew for the flag under which they served should keep the names of the "Wasp" and her men ever memorable in the annals of the great nation whose infancy they so gallantly protected.



## CHAPTER XV.

OPERATIONS ON THE NEW ENGLAND COAST. — THE BOMBARDMENT OF STONINGTON. — DESTRUCTION OF THE UNITED STATES CORVETTE "ADAMS." — OPERATIONS ON CHESAPEAKE BAY. — WORK OF BARNEY'S BARGE FLOTILLA. — ADVANCE OF THE BRITISH UPON WASHINGTON. — DESTRUCTION OF THE CAPITOL. — OPERATIONS AGAINST BALTIMORE. — BOMBARDMENT OF FORT McHENRY.

THE remaining work of the British blockading squadrons along the Atlantic Coast demands some attention, and some account must be given of certain land actions which were inseparably connected with the course of naval events. This narrative can well be divided into two parts, each dealing with the operations of one section of the blockading fleet; thus tracing the course of events up to the close of the war on the New England coast, before taking up the proceedings on the Chesapeake station.

It will be remembered that Decatur had been checked in his attempt to break the blockade at the eastern end of Long Island Sound, and was forced to take the frigates "United States" and "Macedonian," and the sloop-of-war "Hornet," into New London Harbor. Early in December, 1813, he determined to try to slip out; and choosing a dark night, when wind and tide were in his favor, he dropped down the bay, and was about

to put to sea, when bright blue lights blazed up on either side of the harbor's mouth, and the plan was exposed by the treachery of some party never detected. After this failure, the two frigates returned up the river, where they remained until the end of the war. The "Hornet" managed to get to sea, and did good service before peace was declared.

In April, 1814, the British blockaders on the New England coast began active operations by sending an expedition up the Connecticut River to Pautopaug Point, where the invaders landed, spiked the guns of a small battery, and destroyed twenty-two vessels. Thence they proceeded down the river, burning a few more craft on the way, and escaped safely to their ships; although a party of militia, and sailors and marines from Decatur's vessels, attempted to cut them off. Shortly after this occurrence, a fleet of American gunboats attacked the blockading squadron off New London, and succeeded in inflicting serious damages upon the enemy.

In June, the enemy's depredations extended to the Massachusetts coast. The little village of Wareham was the first sufferer. A sudden descent made by boats' crews from the frigates "Superb" and "Nimrod" so completely surprised the inhabitants, that the enemy burned the shipping at the wharves, set fire to a factory, and retreated before the villagers fully comprehended the blow that had fallen upon them. Like occurrences took place at other coast-wise towns; and, in every case, the militia proved powerless to check the enemy. All up and down the New England coast, from Maine to the mouth of the Connecticut River, the people were panic-stricken; and hardly a night passed without witnessing the flames of some bonfire kindled by the British out of American property.

In August, 1814, Commodore Hardy appeared off Stonington with a fleet of several vessels, headed by the seventy-four "Ramillies." Casting anchor near shore, he sent to the mayor and selectmen the following curt note: "Not wishing to destroy the unoffending inhabitants residing in the town of Stonington, one hour is granted them, from the receipt of this, to remove out of town." This message naturally caused great consternation; and, while messengers were sent in all directions to call together the militia, the answer was returned to the fleet: "We shall defend the place to the last extremity. Should it be destroyed, we will

perish in its ruins." And, having thus defied the enemy, the farmers and fishermen who inhabited the town set about preparing for its defence. The one battery available for service consisted of two eighteen-pounders and a four-pounder, mounted behind earth breastworks. The gunners were

THE DESCENT ON WAREHAM.

put under the command of an old sailor, who had been impressed into the British navy, where he served four years. The skill he thus acquired in gunnery, he now gladly used against his former oppressors. It was near nightfall when the British opened fire; and they kept up a constant cannonade with round shot, bombs, Congreve rockets, and carcasses until near midnight, without doing the slightest damage. The bursting shells, the fiery rockets, and the carcasses filled with flaming chemicals, fairly filled the little wooden village with fire; but the exertions of the people prevented the spread of the flames. The fleet ceased firing at midnight, but there was no peace for the villagers. Militiamen were pouring in from the country round about, laborers were at work throwing up breastwork, carriers were dashing about in search of ammunition, and all was activity, until, with the first gleam of daylight, the fire of the ships was re-opened. The Americans promptly responded, and soon two eighteen-pound shot hulled the brig "Despatch." For an hour or two a rapid

fire was kept up; then, the powder giving out, the Americans spiked their largest gun, and, nailing a flag to the battery flag-staff, went in search of more ammunition. The British did not land; and the Americans, finding six kegs of powder, took the gun to a blacksmith, who drilled out the spike, and the action continued. So vigorous and well directed was the fire of the Americans, that the "Despatch" was forced to slip her cables and make off to a place of safety. That afternoon a truce was declared, which continued until eight the next morning. By that time, the Americans had assembled in sufficient force to defeat any landing party the enemy could send ashore. The bombardment of the town continued; but the aim of the British was so inconceivably poor, that, during the three days' firing, no damage was done by their shot. A more ludicrous fiasco could hardly be imagined, and the Americans were quick to see the comical side of the affair. Before departing, the British fired over fifteen tons of lead and iron into the town. A quantity of this was picked up by the Americans, and offered for sale. In a New York paper appeared the advertisement, —

"Just received, and offered for sale, about three tons of round shot, consisting of six, nine, twelve, eighteen, twenty-four, and thirty-two pounds; very handsome, being a small proportion of those which were fired from His Britannic Majesty's ships on the unoffending inhabitants of Stonington, in the recent *brilliant* attack on that place. Likewise a few carcasses, in good order, weighing about two hundred pounds each. Apply," etc.

A popular bard of the time set forth in rollicking verse the exploits of the British gunners: —

"They killed a goose, they killed a hen,
Three hogs they wounded in a pen;
They dashed away, — and pray what then?
That was not taking Stonington.

"The shells were thrown, the rockets flew;
But not a shell of all they threw —
Though every house was full in view —
Could burn a house in Stonington."

With this affair, in which the British expended ammunition to the amount of fifty thousand dollars, and lost twenty men killed and fifty wounded, active offensive operations along the Connecticut coast ended. Farther north, however, the British still raided towns and villages, showing more spirit in their attacks than did Hardy at Stonington. Eastport, Me., was captured in July, and converted into a veritable British colony. The inhabitants who remained in the town were forced to take an oath of allegiance to Great Britain; fortifications were thrown up, and an arsenal established; King George's officials were placed in the custom-house, and thenceforward until the end of the war the town was virtually British. Encouraged by this success, the enemy undertook a more difficult task. A formidable fleet of men-of-war and transports, bearing almost ten thousand troops, was fitted out at Halifax for the purpose of reducing to British rule all that part of Maine lying between Passamaquoddy Bay and the Penobscot River. This expedition set sail from Halifax on the 26th of August, bound for Machias; but on the voyage down the coast of Maine the brig "Rifleman" was encountered, and from her the presence of the United States corvette "Adams" in the Penobscot River was learned. It will be remembered that the "Adams," before entering the river, had chased the British brig. Upon learning this, the British naval commander, Admiral Griffiths, pressed forward to the mouth of the Penobscot, and, anchoring there, despatched a land and naval expedition up the river for the capture of the corvette.

When the news of this advancing force reached Capt. Morris, the "Adams" was partially out of water, dismantled, and in the hands of the ship carpenters, who were repairing the injuries she had received on the rocks off Mount Desert. The ship herself was utterly defenceless, but Morris made strenuous attempts to collect a land force to defend her. He managed to rally a few hundred militia-men, who, with the sailors and marines, were routed by the enemy on the night of the 3d of September Finding that the enemy's forces were not to be driven back by so small a body of men, Morris retreated, first setting fire to the corvette, which was totally destroyed before the British came up.

The retreating sailors were then forced to march over rugged roads to Portsmouth, N.H.; and, as walking was an exercise they were little accustomed to, many suffered severely from the unusual exertion. The difficulty

of getting provisions along the road led the men to separate into several parties; but, notwithstanding the opportunities thus afforded for desertion, all who were not broken down by the long march ultimately reported for duty at the Portsmouth navy-yard.

Along the Southern sea-board the course of the war was even more disastrous to the Americans. Intelligence which reached the national authorities in the spring of 1814 led them to believe that the British were planning an expedition for the capture of Washington. Grave as was the danger, the authorities were slow to move; and though in July the Government called for fifteen thousand troops, and gave their command to Gen. Winder, yet the actual defensive force about the national capital consisted of but a few hundred militia. The naval defence was intrusted to the veteran Commodore Barney, who had served with distinction in the Revolution, and during the early years of the second war with Great Britain had commanded the Baltimore privateer "Rossie." The force put under Barney's command consisted of twenty-six gun-boats and barges, manned by nine hundred men. Chiefly by his own energetic exertions, this force was ready for service in April; and by June the crews were drilled and disciplined, and the commanders schooled in the tactics of squadron evolutions. On the 1st of that month occurred the first brush with the enemy. The American flotilla was then lying in Chesapeake Bay, a little below the mouth of the Patuxent; and, a portion of the enemy's squadron coming within range, Barney ordered out his forces in chase. The British, outnumbered, fled down the bay; but, though Barney was rapidly overhauling them, he saw his hopes of victory shattered by the sudden appearance of His Britannic Majesty's seventy-four gun ship "Dragon." Thus re-enforced, it became the turn of the British to pursue; and the Americans retreated, firing constantly as they fled. The British continuing their advance, Barney was forced to take shelter in the Patuxent River; and he was gradually forced up that stream as far as the mouth of St. Leonard's Creek. The enemy then, feeling certain that the Americans were fairly entrapped, anchored at the mouth of the river, and awaited re-enforcements. These soon arrived; and on the 8th of the month the enemy's forces, consisting of a frigate, brig, and two schooners, moved up the river to the mouth of the creek. Farther they could not go, owing to shoal-water; but they fitted out a small flotilla of barges, and sent them on up the creek.

With this enemy Commodore Barney was ready to come to close quarters; and he moved down upon the British, who quickly retreated to the shelter of their ships. Two or three such sham attacks were made by the enemy, but not until the 10th of the month did they actually give battle to the Americans.

On the morning of that day the British advanced in force to the attack; and the peaceful little creek was ablaze with flags and bright uniforms, and the wooded shores echoed back the strains of martial music. Twenty-one barges, one rocket-boat, and two schooners formed the British column of attack, which moved grandly up the creek, with the bands playing patriotic airs, and the sailors, confident of victory, cheering lustily. Eight hundred men followed the British colors. Against this force Barney advanced with but five hundred sailors. His sloop and gun-vessels he left at anchor, as being too unwieldy for the narrow shoal-waters of St. Leonard's Creek; and he met the enemy's flotilla with but thirteen barges. The enemy opened the action at long range with rockets and howitzers. The former were terrible missiles in an action of this character, corresponding to the shells of modern naval warfare. Some idea of their destructiveness may be derived from the fact, that one of them, fired at long range, exploded and set fire to a boat, after having first passed through the body of one of her crew. Barney had no rockets; and, as the combat at long range was telling upon his men, he at once dashed forward into the midst of the enemy. Soon the barges were engaged in desperate hand-to-hand conflicts. The sailors, grappling with their adversary's craft, fought with pistol and cutlass across the gunwales. Barney, in a small barge with twenty men, dashed about, now striking a blow in aid of some overmatched American boat, then cheering on some laggard, or applauding some deed of gallantry that occurred in his sight. Major William Barney, son of the commodore, saw an American barge on fire, and deserted by her crew who feared the explosion of her magazine. Running his boat alongside, he jumped into the flaming craft; and by dint of bailing in water, and rocking her from side to side, he succeeded in saving the barge. For more than an hour the action raged, both sides fighting with great vigor and gallantry; but the Americans having pierced the British line, the enemy, falling into confusion, turned, and strained every muscle to gain the protection of their ship's guns. The Americans followed in hot pursuit; but their

course was abruptly checked at the mouth of the creek by a British schooner, whose eighteen guns commanded respect. For a moment the pursuing barges fell back; then, choosing advantageous positions, they opened fire upon the schooner with such effect that she soon turned to escape. She succeeded in getting under the protecting guns of the frigate and sloop-of-war, but was so cut to pieces in the short action that she was run aground and abandoned. The larger vessels now opened fire upon Barney's forces; and the flotilla, after a few shots of defiance, returned to its quarters up the creek.

For the next two weeks all was quiet along the shores of the Patuxent and St. Leonard's Creek. The enemy had learned wisdom from their late defeat, and contented themselves with blockading the mouth of the creek, and leaving Barney undisturbed in his retreat. But the doughty commodore had no idea of being thus confined, and during the time of quiet made preparations for an attempt to break the blockade. Land forces from Washington were sent down to aid in this attempt; and two pieces of artillery were to be mounted on a hill at the mouth of the creek, and thence throw red-hot shot into the enemy's ships. The land forces, however, rendered not the slightest assistance; and a too cautious colonel posted the battery at such a point that no shot could reach the enemy without first passing through a hill. Accordingly, when Barney led his flotilla gallantly down to the attack, he found that the issue of the conflict rested upon the sailors alone. From the battery, which was expected to draw the enemy's fire, not a single effective shot was fired. The sailors fought nobly, using their heavy long twelves and eighteens with great effect. But they were sadly hampered by their position; for the mouth of the creek was so narrow that but eight barges could lie abreast, and the others coming down from above soon packed the little stream from shore to shore, giving the enemy a mark that the poorest gunner could hardly miss. Against the storm of grape and canister that the British poured upon them, the sailors had absolutely no protection. The barges were without bulwarks, and the blue-jackets at the guns and at the oars were exposed to the full force of the British fire. Yet in this exposed situation the gallant fellows kept up the fight for nearly an hour, only withdrawing when the last ray of hope for help from the shore battery had vanished. Shortly after the Americans abandoned the attack, the blockad-

ing squadron got under way and stood down the bay. From the way in which one of the frigates was working her pumps, the Americans saw that their fire had not been entirely without effect.

Barney's flotilla had now given the British so much trouble that they determined to destroy it without delay; and an expedition of more than five thousand men — composed of regulars, marines, and a few negroes — was carried up the Patuxent, and landed at Benedict, where an armed brig had been stationed to cover the disembarkation. It was early dawn when the signal to land was given, and the river was covered in an instant with a well-manned and warlike flotilla. It was hard work for the British sailors, for a strong current was running; but by three o'clock in the afternoon the whole army was landed, and encamped in a strong position on a hill overlooking the village. Though no American troops were anywhere in the vicinity, the landing was conducted with the utmost caution. As the prow of each boat grated on the sand, the soldiers leaped on the beach, and instantly drew up in line, ready to repel any attack. After the infantry was landed, about a hundred artillerymen followed, and the same number of sailors dragging howitzers.

It is easily understood that this powerful force was not organized solely to destroy Barney's pitiful little flotilla. The real purpose of the British commander was to press on into the interior, and capture Washington, which the Americans had foolishly left without any defences whatever. It came to Barney's ears that Admiral Cockburn had boasted that he would destroy the American flotilla, and dine in Washington the following Sunday. This news the American commodore sent off to the authorities at the capital, and they then began to make futile preparations to repel the invader. In the mean time the British commenced their march up the shores of the Patuxent, meeting with no opposition. Barney, knowing that the defence of the national capital was of far greater importance than the fate of his flotilla, landed with four hundred men, and hastened to the American lines before Washington. He left the barges under the command of the second lieutenant, Mr. Frazier, with instructions to set fire to every boat on the appearance of the enemy, and then join the commodore with all the men left under his charge. Accordingly, when the invading column reached Nottingham, Mr. Frazier took the flotilla still higher up the creek, — a move that vastly disconcerted the British, who

saw their prey eluding them. "But in the main object of our pursuit we were disappointed," wrote a British officer. "The flotilla which had been stationed opposite to Nottingham retired, on our approach, higher up the stream; and we were consequently in the situation of a huntsman who sees his hounds at fault, and has every reason to apprehend that his game will escape." But the game never fell into the hands of the ardent hunters; for the next day Mr. Frazier fulfilled his orders by setting fire to every barge, and, after seeing several of the larger boats blow up, mustered his men, and cut across the country, to join his superior officer.

SHARP-SHOOTERS.

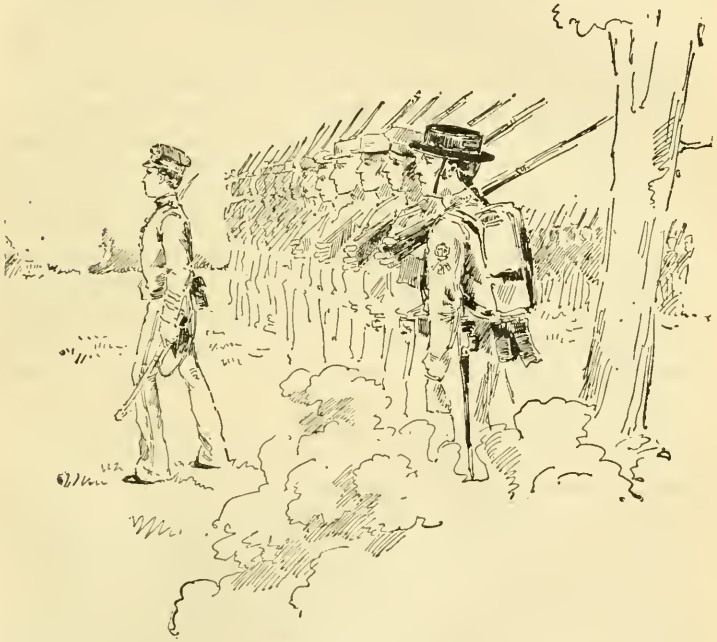
The British naval forces soon after reached Pig Point, the scene of this destruction, and there remained; while the land forces immediately turned away from the river, and marched upon Washington.

It is not necessary to give in detail the incidents of the series of skirmishes by which the British fought their way to the American capital. They were opposed by raw militia, and the few sailors and marines under Barney. The former fled with promptitude at the very first fire, but the sailors and marines fought gallantly. The fighting was sharpest at Bladensburg; and here Barney's blue-jackets won praise from everybody,

even from the enemy whose advance they disputed. Barney himself led the Americans, and sighted a favorite gun of the sailors' battery, until he fell desperately wounded. This battery commanded the road by which the main column of British advanced; and by its hail of grape and canister it beat back the advancing regiments, and for some time checked their further progress. The British thereupon opened with rockets, and sent out sharp-shooters to pick off the Yankee gunners. One of these riflemen was observed by the Americans to deliberately build for himself a small redoubt of stones from an old wall; and, lying down behind it, he began a deliberate fire upon the Americans. His first bullet went through the cap of one of the sailors, and the second sent a poor fellow to his long account. The marines answered with their muskets; but the fellow's stone rampart saved him, and he continued his fire. Barney vowed to put an end to that affair, and, carefully sighting one of his cannon, pulled the lanyard. The heavy round shot was seen to strike the sharp-shooter's defence, and stones and man disappeared in a cloud of dust. Meantime, the enemy had thrown out flanking parties under cover of the woods, and had nearly surrounded the little band of sailors. A musket-ball struck Barney in the thigh, and he began to grow faint with loss of blood; and, finding that the militia had fled, and the sailors were becoming exhausted, the commodore ordered a retreat. The blue-jackets left the field in good order; but their gallant commander had gone but a few steps, when the pain of his wound forced him to lie down under a tree, and await the coming of the enemy. The British soon came up, led by Gen. Ross and Capt. Wainwright of the navy. After learning Barney's rank, and courteously offering to secure surgical aid, the general turned to his companion, and, speaking of the stubborn resistance made by the battery, said, "I told you it was the flotilla men." — "Yes. You were right, though I could not believe you," was the response. "They have given us the only fighting we have had."

Meanwhile, the British, having routed the Americans at every point, pressed on to Washington. The inhabitants fled before them, and the town was almost deserted when the British marched in with banners flying and bands playing. The enemy held the city for only a day; but in that time they did such deeds of vandalism, that even the people and the press of London cried out in indignation. The President's house, the Capitol, all

the public buildings except the Patent Office, were burned to the ground. The navy-yard, with the uncompleted ships on the stocks, was likewise burned; but in this the enemy only acted in accordance with the rules of war. It was their destruction of the public buildings, the national archives, and the Congressional library, that aroused the wrathful indignation of all fair-minded people, whether Americans or Europeans. "Willingly," said



THE MARCH ON WASHINGTON.

one London newspaper, "would we throw a veil of oblivion over our transactions at Washington. The Cossacks spared Paris, but we spared not the capital of America." A second English journal fitly denounced the proceedings as "a return to the times of barbarism."

But, if the invaders are rightly to be blamed for the useless vandalism

they encouraged, the American authorities are still more culpable for their neglect of the most ordinary precautions of war. That a national capital, close to the sea, should be left virtually unprotected while the enemy was massing his forces only a few miles away, seems almost unbelievable. But so it was with Washington; for five hundred flotilla men were forced to bear the brunt of the attack of five thousand British. True it is that the military authorities had massed seven thousand militia-men for the defence of the city; but such was the trepidation of these untrained soldiers, that they fled before the main body of the British had come into the fight. That the sailors and marines fought bravely, we have the testimony of the British themselves. Mr. Gleig, a subaltern in the attacking army, writes, "Of the sailors, however, it would be injustice not to speak in the terms which their conduct merits. They were employed as gunners; and not only did they serve their guns with a quickness and precision which astonished their assailants, but they stood till some of them were actually bayonneted with fuses in their hands; nor was it till their leader was wounded and taken, and they saw themselves deserted on all sides by the soldiers, that they quitted the field." Therefore, in the battle of Bladensburg, the blue-jackets won nothing but honor, though the results of the battle were so mortifying to the national pride of the people of the United States.

On the 25th of August the British left the smoking ruins of Washington behind them, and made for their fleet lying in the Patuxent. They feared that the outraged nation would rise upon them, and turn their march into a bloody retreat, like that of the British soldiery from the historic field of Lexington. Accordingly their departure was by night, immediately after a furious storm of rain and wind. Strict orders were issued to all the Americans in Washington, warning them, under penalty of death, not to leave their houses until the sun rose the next morning. Then the British stealthily marched out of the town. "No man spoke above his breath," says subaltern Gleig. "Our very steps were planted lightly, and we cleared the town without exciting observation." A two days' march brought them to Benedict, where the fleet lay in waiting for their reception.

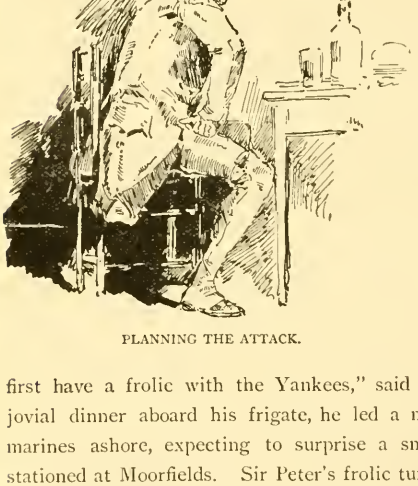
In the mean time, a portion of the British fleet had ascended the Potomac as far as Alexandria, and, finding that town defenceless, proceeded to dictate to the inhabitants the terms upon which they could

save their village from desolation. The British demanded that all naval stores and ordnance, all the shipping and its furniture, all merchandise, and all provisions in the town should be surrendered. Several vessels had been scuttled, to prevent their falling into the hands of the enemy; these, the British demanded, should be raised, repaired, and delivered to them Time, however, did not permit the fulfilment of this condition; but to the others, harsh and humiliating though they were, the inhabitants were forced to accede. Heavy laden with the spoils of the village, the pillagers weighed anchor and started down the Potomac. But they were not destined to carry away their booty unmolested. News of the expedition reached Baltimore, and a large party of the sailors at the navy-yard were sent to the banks of the Potomac to cut off the enemy's retreat. They were officered by four men famous in American naval annals, — Perry, Rodgers, Porter, and Creighton. At Indian Head, just below Mount Vernon, the Potomac River narrows and flows swiftly between densely wooded bluffs. At this point the Americans threw up redoubts, and, mounting all the cannon that could be gathered on such short notice, prepared to dispute the enemy's passage. When the British fleet hove in sight, they were greeted with a storm of shot from the unsuspected batteries; and they recoiled in confusion. Practised American hunters lined the woody shores, and picked off the British sailors with musket-balls. For some time the fleet was thus checked in its progress. Finally the admiral determined that only by a bold dash could he escape; and accordingly, massing his vessels and concentrating his fire on the chief battery, he dashed past, and rejoined his superior officer, Cockburn, not without paying dearly for his exploit at Alexandria.

While the British were thus devastating the shores of Chesapeake Bay, they cast more than one longing look toward the thriving city of Baltimore, which, by its violent patriotism, had done much to urge on the war. From the ship-yards of Baltimore came more than one stout naval vessel that had forced the enemy to haul down his colors. But that which more than any thing else aroused the hatred of the British was the share Baltimore took in fitting out and manning those swift privateers, concerning whose depredations upon British commerce we shall have something to say in a later chapter. "It is a doomed town," said Vice-admiral Warren "The truculent inhabitants of Baltimore must be

tamed with the weapons which shook the wooden turrets of Copenhagen," cried the editor of a great London paper. But, nevertheless, Baltimore did not fall before the invader, although for some time the army and navy of the enemy were united in the attempt to bring desolation upon the obnoxious city.

After the fall of Washington, the depredations of the British along the shores of Chesapeake Bay redoubled, and the marauding expeditions thus employed were really feelers thrown out to test the strength of the defenses of Baltimore. That the marauders found some opposition, is evident from a passage in the journal of a British officer. "But these hasty excursions, though generally successful, were not always performed without loss to the invaders." On one of these expeditions, Sir Peter Parker, captain of the frigate "Menelaus," lost his life. He had been ordered down to the mouth of the bay just after the fall of Washington. "I must first have a frolic with the Yankees," said he. And accordingly, after a jovial dinner aboard his frigate, he led a night expedition of sailors and marines ashore, expecting to surprise a small body of Maryland militia stationed at Moorfields. Sir Peter's frolic turned out disastrously; for the Marylanders were on the watch, and received the invaders with a fierce volley. Sir Peter was gallantly cheering on his men, when a musket-ball cut the main artery in is thigh. "They have hit me, Pearce," he said faintly to his lieutenant; "but it's nothing. Push on, my brave boys, and follow me." But even thus cheering, he fell back, the words died away in his throat, and he bled to death before a surgeon could be found. It is but right to say, that, though he sailed in Cockburn's command, he had none of the cruel brutality which his admiral too often showed.



PLANNING THE ATTACK.

On the 12th of September a more serious assault was made upon Baltimore. The British naval and military forces united in the attack, which was made by land and sea. A force of nine thousand men, including two thousand marines and two thousand sailors, was landed fifteen miles from Baltimore, and under the command of Gen. Ross and Admiral Cockburn marched gayly inland, never doubting that they would find the Americans unprepared, and repeat their exploits at Washington. In this expectation they were sadly disappointed; for the Maryland militia, aided by a few regulars and seamen, outfought the British at every point, and checked their farther advance. Among the slain was Gen. Ross, who was shot down as he was leading the advance of the British skirmishers. In the mean time, the British fleet had been taking its share in the engagement by attempting to reduce Fort McHenry. A large flotilla of frigates, schooners, sloops, and bomb-ketches entered the Patapsco River on the morning of the 12th, and, casting anchor out of the reach of the fort's guns, opened a furious fire. The fort was manned by militiamen and a large detachment of the gallant sailors from Barney's flotilla. When the continual falling of shells within the fort told that the enemy had come within range, the guns of Fort McHenry opened in response. But, to the intense chagrin of the Americans, it was found that their works mounted not a single gun that would carry to the enemy's fleet. There then remained to the garrison only the trying duty of holding their post, and enduring without response a galling fire from the enemy. All the garrison stood to the guns without flinching; while the shrieking shells fell on all sides, and, exploding, scattered deadly missiles in all directions. One shell struck and dismounted one of the twenty-four-pounders, killing and wounding several of its men. Admiral Cochrane, who commanded the attacking fleet, saw this incident, and ordered three of his bomb-vessels to move up nearer to the fort. This gave the Americans the opportunity for which they had been longing, and instantly every gun in the fort opened upon the three luckless ketches. Half an hour of this fire sufficed to drive the three vessels back to their original station.

Night fell, but brought no cessation of the bombardment. But the enemy, while never slackening his fire, had determined to take advantage of the darkness to send out a landing party to take two small batteries on the banks of the Patapsco, and then assault Fort McHenry from the

rear. Twelve hundred and fifty men, with scaling-ladders and fascines, left the fleet in barges, and moved up the Patapsco towards Fort Covington and the City Battery. But their plan, though well laid, was defeated by the vigilance and courage of the garrisons of the two threatened positions, — sailors all, and many of them men from Barney's flotilla, a training-school which seems to have given to the region about Chesapeake Bay its most gallant defenders. Just as the storming party turned the prows of the barges towards the shore, they were discovered; and from McHenry, Covington, and the City Battery burst a thunderous artillery-fire, that shook the houses in Baltimore, and illumined the dark shores of the river with a lurid glare. Bold as the British sailors were, they could advance no farther under so terrible a fire. Two of the barges were shot to pieces, leaving their crews struggling in the water. A ceaseless hail of grape and canister spread death and wounds broadcast among the enemy; and, after wavering a moment, they turned and fled to their ships. Cochrane, seeing his plan for taking the American positions by assault thus frustrated, redoubled the fury of his fire; hoping that, when daybreak made visible the distant shore, nothing but a heap of ruins should mark the spot where Fort McHenry stood the night before.

A night bombardment is at once a beautiful and a terrible spectacle. The ceaseless flashing of the great guns, lighting up with a lurid glare the dense clouds of smoke that hang over the scene of battle; the roar of the artillery; the shriek of the shell as it leaves the cannon's mouth, slowly dying into a murmur and a dull explosion, as, with a flash of fire, the missile explodes far away, — combine to form a picture, that, despite the horrors of wounds and death, rouses the enthusiasm and admiration of the beholder. When viewed from the deck of one of an attacking fleet, the scene is even more impressive. At each discharge of the great guns, the vessel reels and trembles like a huge animal in agony. The surging waters alongside reflect in their black depths the flash of the cannon and the fiery trail of the flying shell. Far in the distance can be seen the flashes of the enemy's guns, each of which may mean the despatch of a missile bringing death and pain in its track. One who has witnessed such a spectacle can readily understand the fascination which men find in the great game of war.

Pacing the deck of the one of the British vessels was a young American,

whose temperament was such that he could fully appreciate all the beauties of the scene, even though harassed by anxious fears lest the British should be successful. This man was Francis S. Key, who had visited the fleet with a flag of truce, but was unable to get away before the bombardment began. When the sun set on the evening of the 13th, Key saw his country's flag waving proudly over the ramparts at which the British guns had been so furiously pounding. Would that flag still be there when the sun should rise again? That was the question which Key asked himself as he anxiously walked the deck throughout the night, striving to pierce the darkness, and make out, by the lurid lightnings of the cannon, whether the flag was still there. As the night wore on, Key took an old letter from his pocket, and on the blank sheet jotted down the lines of the immortal national song, "The Star Spangled Banner." Its words merely voice the writer's thoughts; for often during that night he looked anxiously shorewards, to see if

> "the rockets' red glare, the bombs bursting in air,
> Gave proof, through the night, that our flag was still there."

When the anxiously awaited daylight came, Fort McHenry still stood; and over it waved defiantly the starry folds of the United States flag. The British saw that, by land and sea, their attack had failed; and early in the morning the fleet, after taking on board the remnant of the land forces, sailed suddenly away, and left Baltimore safe. They had bombarded Fort McHenry for twenty-five hours, throwing nearly two thousand shells. Yet, wonderful as it may appear, only four of the Americans were killed, and twenty-four wounded. With this failure the British ended their chief offensive operations along the shores of the Chesapeake. The greater part of the fleet and the soldiery then moved southward, to take part in the operations along the Gulf coast, that culminated in the disastrous defeat of the invaders at New Orleans.

## CHAPTER XVI.

DESULTORY HOSTILITIES ON THE OCEAN. — ATTACK UPON FORT BOWYER. — LAFITTE THE PIRATE. — BRITISH EXPEDITION AGAINST NEW ORLEANS. — BATTLE AT THE RIGOLETS. — ATTACK ON NEW ORLEANS, AND DEFEAT OF THE BRITISH. — WORK OF THE BLUE-JACKETS. — CAPTURE OF THE FRIGATE "PRESIDENT." — THE "CONSTITUTION" TAKES THE "CYANE" AND "LEVANT." — THE "HORNET" TAKES THE "PENGUIN." — END OF THE WAR.

THE naval incidents of the latter part of 1814 conferred little honor upon either of the belligerents. Seldom did the meetings between hostile ships rise to the dignity of battles. One or two small American brigs fell a prey to British frigates; but in every instance the disparity of force was so great that the weaker surrendered without striking a blow. Such was the case with the sixteen-gun brig "Rattlesnake," which escaped from one British frigate by throwing overboard all her guns, only to immediately fall a prey to the "Leander." In July of the same year, the United States brig "Siren" was captured by the British frigate "Medway," off the coast of Africa, after a long chase, during which the American hove overboard every thing movable on the brig. Not all these petty encounters ended so favorably for the enemy. Off New York a cutting-out party of volunteers surprised and captured the British tender "Eagle," a small craft carrying one thirty-two-pound

howitzer, and fourteen men. Ten days later, the frigate "Tenedos," which had done such good service on the blockade, suffered the loss of her tender, which was gallantly carried away by the crew of a Yankee gunboat. Some very desperate combats between American privateers and British naval vessels were fought about this time, and will be duly noted in detail in the chapter treating of the exploits of the private armed navy.

As the autumn came on, the British naval forces began to rendezvous in the Gulf of Mexico, preparatory to the campaign before New Orleans. On Sept. 14, a squadron of four British sloops-of-war appeared off Mobile, and opened fire upon Fort Bowyer, which guarded the entrance to Mobile Bay. The attack was vigorous, and the defence determined. A British land expedition moved upon the fort from the landward side; and the little garrison found itself surrounded by enemies, many of whom were Indians, whose savage assistance the British had accepted from the very opening of the war. A small force, only, defended the fort. Percy, the British admiral, knew the weakness of the garrison; and, thinking of the ninety-two guns he could bring to bear against the twenty worked by the Americans, announced proudly, that he would give the garrison just twenty minutes to surrender. The twenty minutes passed quickly, and still the fort responded savagely to the fire of its assailants. The flag of the British ship "Hermes" was shot away; and soon after, a round shot cut her cable, and she drifted upon a sand-bank, and lay helpless, and exposed to a raking fire. Her captain, having set her afire, abandoned her; and she soon blew up. The other vessels kept up the attack gallantly for a time. The flag-staff of the fort was shot away; but the flag soon re-appeared, waving from a sponge-staff. The Americans then redoubled their fire, which soon told so severely upon the British ships that they were forced to withdraw. In the mean time, the assault of the Indians and troops had been checked, and the forces driven back in disorder, thus leaving the victory to the Americans.

It is not within the province of this work to treat of the military operations that led up to the battle of New Orleans. But the last months of 1814 witnessed a series of naval incidents trivial in themselves, but deriving importance from their connection with Gen. Jackson's great victory. Over certain incidents in the preparations of the Americans for repelling the invasion hangs a shade of romance.

To the southward of the quaint, rambling, rose-covered city of New Orleans, the tawny flood of the Mississippi winds towards the gulf in huge serpentine curves. The shores between which it flows rise scarce higher than the surface of the river itself; and a slight increase in the volume of water, or a strong wind, will serve to turn the whole region into a great, watery marsh. From the mouth of the great river, the whole coast of Louisiana, extending north and west, is a grassy sea, a vast expanse of marsh-grass, broken here and there by inlets of the Mexican Gulf, and sluggish, winding bayous that lead up into the higher lands of the State, — water-ways that lead even to the back door of the Crescent City herself, but known only to oyster-gatherers, or in 1814 to the adventurous men who followed the banner of Lafitte the Barataria pirate.

Pirate he was called then; but it is doubtful whether his misdeeds ever exceeded smuggling, or, at worst, privateering under the protecting flag of some belligerent nation. When all nations were warring, what was easier than for a few gallant fellows, with swift-sailing feluccas, to lurk about the shores of the gulf, and now under the Spanish flag, now under the French, or any colors which suited the case, sally out and capture the richly laden Indiamen that frequented those summer seas? And when a power known as the United States Government, that had its quarters more than a thousand miles from the country of the Creoles, passed an outrageous law known as the embargo, what was more natural than that the Baratarians, knowing the mysterious water-ways that led up to the Crescent City, should utilize their knowledge to take ships and cargoes in and out without the formality of a custom-house examination? Such were the times that led to the formation and growth of the "piratical" colony of Barataria. Its leaders and rulers were John and Pierre Lafitte; one of whom lived in New Orleans in the character of a prosperous merchant, while the other led the expeditions which brought in merchandise to stock the former's stores. Under the influence of the warlike state of Europe, the trade of these worthies throve, and their settlement at Grande Isle took on the appearance of a prosperous colony and naval station. Storehouses and dwellings stood close to the sea. The fertile face of the island was cut up into fruitful plantations and orange-groves. Breastworks, well dotted with the muzzles of cannon, commanded the approach by sea. More than once, from behind those ramparts, the Bar-

atarians had proved that they could fight, and that they acknowledged the authority of no flag. The Creoles of New Orleans looked indulgently upon the conduct of the outlaws; but the few Americans in the city were highly incensed to see the authority of the United States thus set aside, and vowed that when the war was over the audacious adventurers should be crushed. However, the end came even sooner.

On the 3d of September, a British armed brig anchored near the buccaneers' retreat, and sent a flag of truce ashore. Lafitte, with great dignity, received the envoys in his tent, and assured them of his protection, though the whole village was up in arms clamoring for the death of the intruders. The British officer then announced that he had come to secure the aid of Lafitte and his followers in the campaign against New Orleans. He offered the pirate captain forgiveness for all piracies committed against the British flag, — whereat the chief smiled sardonically, — also thirty thousand dollars in cash, a captain's commission in the British navy, and lands for himself and his followers. It was a tempting bribe; for at that moment Lafitte's brother lay in the *calaboza* at New Orleans awaiting trial for piracy, and the Americans were preparing rapidly for a descent upon the Barataria stronghold. But, little as he liked the American flag, Lafitte liked the British still less: so, asking the Englishman to wait a few days for his answer, he sent a report of the occurrence to the New Orleans authorities, and offered to co-operate with the Americans, if he could be assured of pardon for all offences committed against the government. This document caused some hesitation at New Orleans; but the military authorities determined to refuse the offer, and break up the outlaws' nest. Accordingly, a few days later, the war schooner "Carolina," six gun-boats, a tender, and a launch, dropped down the Mississippi, and, rounding into the deep blue waters of the gulf, headed for Barataria. Lafitte had too many friends in New Orleans not to know of the force thus sent against him; and, when the Americans reached Grande Terre, they found the pirates at their batteries, and the Baratarian flotilla drawn up in order of battle. The contest was sharp, but ended in the rout of the Baratarians. Their village was burned, their fortifications razed; and, when the triumphant Americans returned to New Orleans, they brought in their train ten armed prizes and a number of prisoners, although Lafitte was not to be found among the latter. Thereafter, the Baratarians, as an organization, vanished from history.

Lafitte was afterwards occasionally heard of as a desperado on the more western shores of the Mexican Gulf; and it is further noticeable, that two guns were served by Baratarians under their old lieutenant, Dominique Yon, on that bloody day when Packenham's forces were beaten back on the field of Chalmette.

Early in December the movement of the British upon New Orleans took definite shape. On the 8th of that month, the calm waters of the Gulf of Mexico, off the Chandeleur Islands, were the scene of a grand rendezvous of British naval and military forces. All the vessels of Cockburn's Chesapeake fleet were there, with other men-of-war, transports, and schooners, to the number of fifty vessels. At the head was the towering two-decker "Tonnant," carrying the Admiral's flag. Frigates, corvettes, and sloops-of-war came trooping in the rear; and the transports bore seven thousand men for the capture of the Southern city. The British were in high good-humor as the anchors were let fall and the ships swung round with their heads to the tide. The voyage across the gulf from the rendezvous at Jamaica had been like a holiday trip. The weather had been fine, and the sea smooth; and the soft air of that semi-tropical region was a never-ending source of delight to sailors who had been suffering the hardships of a Northern station.

The point at which the British fleet had come to anchor lay about fifty miles due east of New Orleans. In that day of sailing-vessels, no enemy could breast the waters of the rolling Mississippi and crush the resistance of the city's defenders, as did Farragut in 1862. Knowing that they could not hope to take their ships up to the levee of the city, the enemy determined to cast anchor near the entrance of Lake Borgne, and send through a chain of lakes and bayous a mammoth expedition in barges, to a point within ten miles of the city. But this well-laid plan had been betrayed to the Americans by Lafitte; and a little band of American sailors, under the command of Lieut. Catesby Jones, had taken up a position at the Rigolets, and were prepared to dispute the farther progress of the invading forces. Five gunboats, and one hundred and eighty-five men, constituted the American force, which for a time held the British in check. Finally, the enemy, finding that the swift American cutters could easily evade the lumbering war-vessels, fitted out a fleet of forty-five barges, manned by a thousand veteran British sea-dogs, who had seen

service in half a dozen naval wars. The Americans had news of the contemplated attack, and made skilful preparations to meet it. The gunboats were moored in a fore and aft line, at a point near the Rigolets. Their broadsides bore upon the enemy, and the shallowness of the water was such that by no means could they be surrounded. The sailors were prepared for a desperate conflict, and spent the night before the battle in tricing up the boarding-nettings, sharpening cutlasses, and getting small-arms in good trim. In the morning the British came on to the attack. It was a long pull from the fleet to the place of battle: so their commander brought his flotilla to anchor just out of range of the American guns; and there the grim old veterans devoured their dinners, and took their rations of grog, with appetites undisturbed by the thought of the coming conflict. Dinner over, the enemy weighed anchor, and dashed forward, with long, swift strokes, into the very flashes of the Americans' cannon. The Americans knew that their one chance of victory was to keep the overwhelming forces of their foe out of boarding distance, and they worked their guns with a rapidity born of desperation. Musket-bullets, grape-shot, and canister poured in a murderous fire upon the advancing boats. But the sturdy old British veterans knew that the best way to stop that fire was to get at the base of it; and they pressed on undauntedly, responding vigorously, meanwhile, with their bow guns. Soon they were up to the gunwales of the American flotilla, and the grappling-irons were fixed; then, with sharp blows of cutlasses, deadly play of the pikes, and a ceaseless rattle of small-arms, they poured upon the decks of the Americans. The boarding-nettings could not long check so furious a foe, and fell before the fierce slash of the cutlasses. The decks once gained, the overpowering numbers of the Englishmen crushed all further resistance; and the flotilla was finally taken, after about one hundred of the enemy and fifty Americans had fallen.

The American flotilla being thus shattered, there remained no further obstacle to prevent the landing of the invading army. Of the advance of that brilliant body of veteran troops over sands and marshes, and through sluggish bayous and canals half-full of stagnant water, until they emerged on the bank of the river, nine miles below New Orleans, it is not my purpose to speak further. Nor does an account of Gen. Jackson's vigorous measures of defence and glorious victory come within the

province of this narrative. The interesting story of Jackson's creation of an army from leather-shirted Kentucky riflemen, gay Creoles from the Creole Quarter of the Crescent City, swarthy Spaniards and mulattoes, nondescript desperadoes from the old band of Lafitte, and militia and regulars from all the Southern States, forms no part of the naval annals of the war. It is enough to say that the flower of the British army, led by a veteran of the Peninsula, recoiled before that motley crew of untrained soldiers, and were beaten back, leaving their gallant leader and thousands of their brave men dead upon the field. The navy was not without some share in this glorious triumph. On the 23d of December the schooner "Carolina" dropped down from New Orleans, and opened fire upon the enemy. "Now, then, for the honor of America, give it to them!" sung out her commander, as the first broadside was fired. The attack, unexpected as it was, created a panic in the British camp. A feeble reply was made with rockets and musketry; but even this was soon discontinued, and the enemy took refuge under the steep bank of the levee, whither the plunging shot could not follow them. All night the "Carolina" kept up her fire; and, when at daybreak she moved away, she left the camp of the enemy in confusion. During the day she renewed the attack, and persisted in her fire until the British threw up a heavy battery on the river's bank, and replied. The lads of the "Carolina" promptly accepted the challenge thus offered, and for a time a spirited combat was maintained. But the battery threw red-hot shot, and the schooner was soon set on fire and destroyed. Meanwhile the corvette "Louisiana" had come down to the scene of action, and in the subsequent engagements did some effective work. When the final onslaught of the British was made, on Jan. 7, 1815, the guns of the "Louisiana" were mounted on the opposite bank of the river, and the practised sailors worked them with deadly effect, until the flight of the American militia on that side exposed the battery to certain capture. The sailors then spiked their guns, and marched off unmolested. The sailors of the "Carolina," on that day of desperate fighting, were in the centre of Jackson's line, between the Creoles and the swarthy Baratarians under Dominique You. Here they worked their howitzers, and watched the scarlet lines of the enemy advance and melt away before that deadly blaze; advance and fall back again in hopeless rout. And among the many classes of fighting men whom Jackson had rallied before

that British line, none did battle more valiantly for the honor of the nation and the safety of the flowery city of New Orleans than did those blue-jackets ashore.

It is a fitting commentary upon the folly of war, that the battle of New Orleans was fought after the two warring nations had signed a treaty of peace. The lives of some hundreds of brave Englishmen and Americans were needlessly sacrificed in a cause already decided. Far across the Atlantic Ocean, in the quaint old Dutch city of Ghent, representatives of England and the United States met, and, after some debate, signed the treaty on the 24th of December, 1814. But there was then no Atlantic cable, no "ocean greyhounds" to annihilate space and time; and it was months before the news of the treaty reached the scene of war. In the mean time, the hostilities were continued by land and sea.

The year 1815 found the American navy largely increased by new vessels, though the vigilance of the British blockaders kept most of these close in port. The "Constitution" was at sea, having run the blockade at Boston. In New York Harbor were the "President," "Peacock," "Hornet," and "Tom Bowline," awaiting a chance to slip out for a cruise to the East Indies. It was decided that the vessels should run out singly, and the "President" was selected to make the first attempt. The night of the 14th of January was dark and foggy, and the blockading fleet was nowhere to be seen. Then, if ever, was the time for escape; and the Yankee tars weighed anchor and started out through the Narrows. In the impenetrable darkness of the night, baffled by head-winds and perplexing currents, the pilots lost their reckoning, and the orders to the man at the wheel were quick and nervous, until an ominous grating of the ship's keel, followed by the loss of headway, told that the frigate was aground. For a time the ship lay helpless, straining all her timbers as each wave lifted her slightly, and then let the heavy hull fall back upon the shoal. By ten o'clock the rising tide floated her off; but, on examination, Capt. Decatur found that she was seriously injured. To return to port was impossible with the wind then blowing: so all sail was crowded on, in the hopes of getting safely away before the blockading squadron should catch sight of the ship. As luck would have it, the blockaders had been forced from their posts by the gale of the day before, and the "President" had laid her course so as to infallibly fall

into their clutches. Before daylight the lookout reported two sail in sight, and at daybreak the ship was fairly surrounded by the enemy's vessels. All at once gave chase to the luckless American; and a few hours were enough to show that her sailing qualities were so seriously injured by her pounding on the bar, that the enemy was rapidly overhauling her. Decatur adopted every known expedient to increase his ship's speed, but to no avail. After she had been lightened by starting the water, cutting away boats and anchors, chopping up and heaving overboard the ponderous cables, together with spars and provisions, the enemy still gained; and the foremost pursuer, a razee, opened fire. The "President" responded with her stern-chasers, but her shot had no effect. "It is said that on this occasion," writes Cooper, "the shot of the American ship were observed to be thrown with a momentum so unusually small, as to have since excited much distrust of the quality of her gunpowder. It is even added, that many of these shot were distinctly seen, when clear of the smoke, until they struck." At six o'clock in the evening, the frigate "Endymion" led the British squadron in chase, and had gained a position so close upon the American's beam that her broadsides were rapidly crippling the fugitive. Thereupon Decatur determined upon a desperate expedient, that sounds like some of his reckless exploits in the war with Tripoli. His plan was to bring the "President" about, and run boldly alongside the enemy. Every thing was to be sacrificed to the end of getting to close quarters. When once the two ships had grappled, the Americans were to board, carry the British ship in a hand-to-hand battle, and then, abandoning the crippled "President," escape in the captured frigate. So desperate a plan needed the cordial co-operation of every man: so it was first presented to the commissioned officers, who gladly embraced the desperate project. The sailors were then sent aft, and Decatur addressed them from the quarter-deck.

"My lads," said he, "that ship is coming up with us. As our ship won't sail, we'll go on board of theirs, every man and boy of us, and carry her into New York. All I ask of you is to follow me. This is a favorite ship of the country. If we allow her to be taken, we shall be deserted by our wives and sweethearts. What, let such a ship as this go for nothing! 'Twould break the heart of every pretty girl in New York."

With hearty cheers, the jackies returned to their guns. All were ready for the coming struggle. Over the main hatch was mounted a howitzer, with its black muzzle peering down into the hold, ready to scuttle the ship when the boarders should spring upon the enemy's deck. The sun, by this time, had sunk below the horizon, and the darkness of night was gathering over the ocean. The two ships surged toward each other, — great black masses, lighted up on either side by rows of open ports, through which gleamed the uncertain light of the battle-lanterns. On the gun-deck the men stood stern and silent; their thoughts fixed upon the coming battle, or perhaps wandering back to the green fields and pleasant homes they had so recently left, perhaps forever. The gray old yeoman of the frigate, with his mates, walked from gun to gun, silently placing a well-sharpened cutlass, a dirk, and a heavy leather boarding-cap at each man's side. The marines were drawn up in a line amidships; their erect, soldierly air and rigid alignment contrasting with the careless slouchiness of the sailors. Butts for the sailors' ridicule as they were during a cruise, the marines knew that, in hand-to-hand conflicts, their part was as dashing as that of their tormentors of the forecastle.

When the "President" had come within a quarter of a mile of her adversary, Decatur perceived that his enemy was determined to decide the contest at long range. As the "President" hauled down nearer, the "Endymion" sheered off, keeping up meanwhile a vigorous cannonade. To this the Americans responded in kind; and so much superior was the gunnery of the Yankee tars, that the rigging of the enemy was seen to be fast going to pieces, while her guns were being silenced one by one. But her fire did sad havoc among the men of the "President," and particularly among the officers. The first broadside carried away Decatur's first lieutenant, Mr. Babbitt, who was struck by a thirty-two-pound shot, which cut off his right leg below the knee, and hurled him through the wardroom hatch to the deck below, fracturing his wounded leg in two places. Shortly after, Decatur was knocked to the deck by a heavy splinter. For some time he lay unconscious; then opening his eyes, and seeing a throng of anxious seamen about him, he ordered them to their stations, and resumed his duties. The fire of the "Endymion" then slackened; and she lay upon the water, with her sails cut

from the yards. At that moment Lieut. Howell turned to a midshipman standing at his side, and said gayly, "Well, we have whipped that ship, at any rate." A flash from the bow of the Englishman followed; and he added, "No: there she is again." The midshipman turned to reply, and saw Howell stretched dead at his feet, killed by the last shot of the battle.

The enemy was now helpless, and it would have been easy enough for the "President" to choose her position and compel her adversary to strike; but the presence of two more Englishmen, rapidly coming up astern, forced the Americans to abandon their prey and continue their flight. It was then late in the evening, and the night was dark and starless. Every light was extinguished on the American frigate, in the hope that by so doing she might slip away under cover of the night. But the British lookouts were sharp-eyed; and by eleven o'clock two frigates had closed in on the

THE "PRESIDENT" TRIES TO ESCAPE.

crippled ship, and a third was rapidly coming up astern. All were pouring in rapid broadsides, and the dark waters were lighted up like a fiery sea by the ceaseless flashing of the guns. Thus surrounded and overpowered, there remained open to the Americans no course but to surrender; and at eleven o'clock at night the "President" made signal that she had struck. Her fate, like that of the "Chesapeake," had accorded with the

superstitious sailors' notion that she was an unlucky ship. In the long running fight, neither the Americans nor the British had escaped without severe loss. On the "President" were twenty-four killed and fifty-six wounded; the first, second, and third lieutenants being among the slain The "Endymion" had eleven men killed and fourteen wounded. The two frigates were ordered to proceed to Bermuda; but the "President's" bad luck seemed to follow her, for on the way she encountered a terrific gale, by which her masts were carried away, and her timbers so strained that all the upper-deck guns had to be thrown overboard to save the ship.

The loss of the "President," at the very mouth of the New York Harbor, was certainly a most inauspicious opening for the naval operations of 1815. The people of New York and Philadelphia, to whom had come neither the news of peace nor of the glorious success of the American arms at New Orleans, were plunged into despondency. "Now that Great Britain is at peace with Europe," thought they, "she can exert all her power in the task of subjugating America;" and mournful visions of a return to British rule darkened their horizon. But, even while they were thus saddened by Decatur's defeat, a gallant vessel — the monarch of the American navy — was fighting a good fight for the honor of the nation; and out of that fight she came with colors flying and two captive men-of-war following in her wake.

It will be remembered that the "Constitution" left Boston in December, 1814, for an extended cruise. The gallant frigate, always a favorite among man-o'-war's men, carried with her on this cruise a full crew of native Americans, — thorough seamen, and as plucky fighters as ever pulled a lanyard or carried a cutlass. Her course lay due east; and in January, 1815, she was in the Bay of Biscay, where she fell in with, and captured, two prizes. After this she cruised about for a month, without encountering an enemy. American privateers and cruisers had fairly driven British merchantmen from the seas, and the tars of the "Constitution" found their time hanging heavily on their hands. The captain was an able and considerate officer, and much freedom was allowed the jackies in their amusements. With boxing, broadsword, and single-stick play, drill and skylarking, the hours of daylight were whiled away; and by night the men off duty would gather about the forecastle lantern to play with greasy, well-thumbed cards, or warble tender ditties to black-eyed Susans far across

the Atlantic. Patriotic melodies formed no small part of Jack's musical *repertoire*. Of these, this one, written by a landsman, was for a long time popular among the tuneful souls of the forecastle, and was not altogether unknown in the wardroom.

"Now coil up y'r nonsense 'bout England's great navy,
And take in y'r slack about oak-hearted tars;
For frigates as stout, and as gallant crews have we,
Or how came their "Macedon" decked with our stars?
Yes, how came her "Guerriere," her "Peacock," and "Java,"
All sent broken-ribbed to old Davy of late?
How came it? Why, split me, than Britons we're braver;
And that they shall feel, too, whenever we meet.
Then charge the can cheerily,
Send it round merrily:
Here's to our country, and captains commanding;
To all who inherit
Of Lawrence the spirit
Disdaining to strike while a stick is left standing."

Many were the verses of this notable production; for, to be popular in the forecastle, a song must play a lengthy part in "teasing time." One verse, however, is enough to show the manly, if perhaps unreasoning, pride the blue-jackets took in the triumphs of the navy.

But the time of the sailors on this closing cruise of the war was not destined to be spent in sport and singing alone. The noble frigate was not to return to the stagnation of a season of peace in port, without adding yet another honor to her already honorable record. On the morning of the 20th of February, as the ship was running aimlessly before a light wind, some inexplicable impulse led Capt. Stewart to suddenly alter his course and run off some sixty miles to the south-west. Again the "Constitution's" good luck seemed to justify the sailors' belief, for at noon she ran into a group of vessels. The first vessel was sighted on the larboard bow, and, as the frigate overhauled her, proved to be a full-rigged ship. Soon after a second sail, also a ship, was sighted; and a few minutes more sufficed to show that both were men-of-war. The one first sighted was the frigate-built corvette "Cyane," of thirty-four guns; and the second was the sloop-of-war "Levant," of twenty-one guns. For either of

these vessels singly, the "Constitution," with her fifty-two guns and crew of four hundred and fifty men, was more than a match. Yet to attack the two was a bold movement, and this Stewart determined to undertake. Hardly had the character of the strangers been made out, when the corvette was seen making signals to the sloop; and the two vessels, then about ten miles apart, made all sail to get together before the enemy should overhaul them. This juncture was precisely what Stewart wished to prevent; and in a trice the shrill notes of the boatswain's whistle sent the sailors in swarms into the rigging, and the frigate was as if by magic clothed with a broad expanse of canvas. Quickly she felt the effect, and bounded through the water after the distant ships like a dolphin chasing a school of flying-fish. The old tars on the forecastle looked knowingly over the side at the foamy water rushing past, and then cast approving glances aloft where every sail was drawing. But their complacency was shattered by a loud crash aloft, which proved to be the main royal-mast which had given way under the strain. Another spar was rigged speedily, and shipped by the active tars, and soon the snowy clouds aloft showed no signs of the wreck. At sundown the three vessels were so near each other that their colors could be seen. Stewart ran up the stars and stripes, to which the strangers responded by setting the British flag at their mastheads.

The purpose of the enemy was to delay the opening of the action until night should give him opportunity to manœuvre unobserved; but the "Constitution," suspecting this, pressed forward hotly, and opened fire a few minutes after six o'clock. By skilful seamanship Stewart kept the windward gage of both enemies; and the fight opened with the "Cyane" on the port-quarter, and the "Levant" on the port-bow of the American frigate. Fifteen minutes of fierce cannonading followed, the combatants being within musket-shot most of the time. Every gun was engaged; and the heavy broadsides shook the ships, and thundered far over the placid surface of the ocean, which was now faintly illumined by the rising moon. The triangular space between the ships was filled with the dense sulphurous smoke of the burning powder; so that the gunners could see nothing of the enemy at whom they were hurling their ponderous iron bolts. The men in the tops could now and again catch a glimpse of the top hamper of the enemy's ships, but those on the gun-deck were working almost at random. After a few minutes of rapid

firing, the fire of the enemy slackened; and Stewart directed his gunners to cease until the smoke should have cleared away. At this command a silence, almost oppressive after the heavy cannonading, ensued, broken only by the occasional report of a gun from the unseen enemy, sounding like minute-guns of distress. Anxiously Stewart waited for the smoke to blow away. When it did so, the "Cyane" was seen luffing up, to come under the frigate's stern, and get in a raking broadside. The movement was discovered just in time to be checked. Stewart gave a heavy broadside to the "Levant;" then, bracing back his topsails, backed his ship down abreast of the "Cyane," pouring in rapid broadsides, before which the fire of the corvette died away. Two raking broadsides that crashed into the stern of the "Levant" sent that craft out of the action, to refit. The frigate then pressed down upon the "Cyane," and with a few heavy broadsides forced her to strike.

Capt. Douglass of the "Levant" then proved his bravery by standing by his captured consort; although he could have escaped easily, while the "Constitution" was taking possession of her prize. No thought of flight seems to have occurred to the gallant Briton, though he must have known that there was but little hope of his coming out of the combat victorious. Still he gallantly came back into the fight, meeting the "Constitution" ploughing along on the opposite tack. Broadsides were exchanged at such close range that the Yankee gunners could hear the ripping of the planks on the enemy's decks as the solid shot crashed through beam and stanchion. Having passed each other, the ships wore, and returned to the attack; but the weight of the American's metal told so severely upon the "Levant" that her flag was hauled down, and, firing a gun to leeward, she gave up the fight.

As an exhibition of seamanship, this action is unrivalled in naval annals. For Stewart to have taken his ship into action with two hostile vessels, and so handle her as not only to escape being raked, but actually rake his enemies, was a triumph of nautical skill. The action was hard fought by both parties. The loss upon the British vessels has never been exactly determined; but it was undoubtedly large, for the hulls were badly cut up by the American's fire. The "Constitution" had but three men killed, and twelve wounded. The officers all escaped unhurt.

After a few hours' pause to repair damages, Stewart took his prizes

into Porto Praya in the Cape Verde Islands, where they arrived on the 10th of March. The day after the ships reached port, a heavy fog settled over the water, cutting off vision in all directions. As the first lieutenant of the "Constitution" was walking the quarter-deck, he heard a young midshipman among the prisoners suddenly exclaim, "There's a large ship in the offing." The lieutenant peered about on every side, but could see nothing, until, looking upward, he saw the top-gallant sails of a large ship moving along above the fog-bank. Capt. Stewart was quickly notified; and, coolly remarking that the stranger was probably a British frigate, he ordered that the men be sent to quarters, and the ship prepared for action. The lieutenant hastened on deck to execute the orders, but had hardly reached his station when he saw the sails of two more ships gliding along above the fog-bank. Hastily he returned to the captain's cabin with the report. Stewart showed no emotion or alarm, although he knew well that the fact that he was in a neutral port would be no protection against the British, should they once discover his presence. The affair of the "Essex" was still fresh in his mind. Calmly he ordered the lieutenant to make sail and take the ship to sea, signalling to the two prizes to follow. The orders were given quietly on deck; and in fifteen minutes the "Constitution," under full press of sail, was making her way out of Porto Praya roads. On the shore were more than a hundred prisoners whom Stewart had landed under parole. Regardless of the dictates of honor, these men rushed to a Portuguese battery, and opened fire on the ships as they passed out. Hearing the cannonade, the lookouts on the enemy's vessels looked eagerly for its cause, and caught sight, above the fog, of the rapidly receding topsails of the fugitives. At this sight the British set out in pursuit; and the fog soon clearing away revealed to the Americans two ships-of-the-line and a frigate following fast in their wake. The "Constitution" and the "Cyane" easily kept out of reach of their pursuers; but the "Levant" dropped behind, and finally, at a signal from Stewart, tacked, and stood back for Porto Praya. The enemy then abandoned the pursuit of the two foremost vessels, and followed the "Levant," but failed to overhaul her before she entered the harbor. This, however, checked the British not a whit. For the laws of nations and the authority of the Portuguese flag that floated over the little town, they cared nothing. On they came,

and opened fire on the "Levant," which had dropped anchor under what was supposed to be a neutral battery. The Americans soon discovered their error. Not only did the British disregard the neutrality of the port, but the paroled prisoners on shore took possession of the battery, and opened fire upon the beleagured craft. Thus caught betwen two fires, no hope remained to the Americans; and, after a few minutes' gallant but useless defence, the flag of the "Levant" was hauled down, and she passed again into the hands of the British.

It was late in May before the "Constitution" reached New York. Peace had then been declared; but none the less were Stewart and his men feasted and honored. The old frigate had won for herself a name ever to be remembered by the people of the nation, in whose service she had received and dealt so many hard knocks. "Old Ironsides," they called her; and even to-day, when a later war has given to the navy vessels whose sides are literally iron, the "Constitution" still holds her place in the hearts of the American people, who think of her lovingly by the well-won title of "Old Ironsides."

While we have been following thus Stewart and his gallant frigate in their final cruise, some smaller vessels were doing good work for the credit of the American flag. It will be remembered, that, when the "President" left New York Bay on her short and disastrous cruise of January, 1815, she left behind her, at anchor, the "Peacock," the "Hornet," and the "Tom Bowline. These vessels, knowing nothing of the fate of their former consort, awaited only the coming of a gale sufficient to drive away the blockading squadron. On the 22d of January it came up to blow; and the three craft, under storm canvas, scudded over the bar, and made for the rendezvous at Tristan d'Acunha. On the way thither they separated, the "Hornet" cruising alone. On the 23d she sighted a strange sail on the horizon, and, clapping on all sail, bore down upon her. At the same time the stranger sighted the "Hornet," and made for her, evidently with hostile intent. The two vessels approached each other until within musket-shot, when the stranger hoisted English colors, and fired a gun. Capt. Biddle of the American ship was ready for the fray, and opened fire with a broadside. The response of the enemy was vigorous and effective. For fifteen minutes the firing was constant; but the enemy, seeing that the Americans were getting the better of the fight, then strove to close and

board. This Biddle determined to avoid, but called up the boarders to beat back the enemy, should they succeed in closing. "At the instant," he writes, in his official report, "every officer and man repaired to the quarter-deck, when the two vessels were coming in contact, and eagerly pressed me to permit them to board the enemy; but this I would not permit, as it was evident, from the commencement of the action, that our fire was greatly superior, both in quickness and effect. The enemy's bowsprit came between our main and mizzen rigging, on our starboard side, affording him an opportunity to board us, if such was his design; but no attempt was made. There was a considerable swell on; and, as the sea lifted us ahead, the enemy's bowsprit carried away our mizzen-shrouds, stern davits, and spanker-boom, and he hung upon our larboard quarter. At this moment an officer called out that they had surrendered. I directed the marines and musketry men to cease firing; and while on the taffrail, asking if they had surrendered, I received a wound in the neck."

This wound, to which the captain so casually alludes, merits more than a passing reference. The fire of both ships had ceased when Biddle stepped upon the taffrail; but he had stood there only a moment, when two or three of the officers on the quarter-deck cried out that a man on the Englishman was aiming at him. Biddle did not hear the caution; but two American marines saw the enemy's movement, and, quickly bringing up their muskets, sent two balls crashing into the brain of the English marksman. He fell back dead, but had fired his piece before falling. The bullet struck Biddle in the neck, inflicting a painful, but not serious, wound. The blood flowed freely, however; and two sailors, rushing up, were about to carry their commander to the cock-pit, when he stopped them. Determined to do something to stanch the flowing blood, a sailor tore his shirt into bandages, with which he bound up his captain's wound. But let us return to Biddle's narrative.

"The enemy just then got clear of us; and his foremast and bowsprit being both gone, and perceiving us wearing to give him a fresh broadside, he again called out that he had surrendered. It was with difficulty that I could restrain my crew from firing into him again, as he had certainly fired into us after having surrendered. From the firing of the first gun, to the last time the enemy cried out that he had surrendered, was exactly twenty-two minutes by the watch. She proved to be His Britannic Majesty's

brig "Penguin," mounting sixteen thirty-two-pound carronades, two long twelves, a twelve-pound carronade on the top-gallant forecastle, with a swivel on the capstan in the tops."

On boarding the prize, Biddle found that she had suffered too severely from the American fire to ever be of service again. He accordingly removed the prisoners and wounded to his own ship, and scuttled the "Penguin." Hardly was this operation accomplished, when two sail were sighted, bearing rapidly down upon the scene of action. Nothing daunted, the lads of the "Hornet" went to their guns, but were heartily glad to find that the two vessels approaching were the "Peacock" and "Tom Bowline." On their arrival, the latter vessel was converted into a cartel, and sent into Rio de Janeiro with prisoners; while the "Hornet" and "Peacock" cruised on toward the Indian Seas. On April 28 a heavy line-of-battle ship was sighted, and gave chase. In the flight the two sloops parted; the "Peacock" going off unmolested, while the "Hornet" fled, hotly pursued by the enemy. For a time it seemed as if the little craft must fall a prey to her huge pursuer, which had come up within a mile, and was firing great shot at the scudding sloop-of-war. Overboard went cables, guns, spars, shot, every thing that would lighten the "Hornet." The sails were wet down, and every thing that would draw was set. By consummate skill Biddle at last succeeded in evading his pursuer; and on the 9th of June the "Hornet entered New York Bay, without a boat or anchor, and with but one gun left. But she brought the report that the last naval battle of the war had ended in victory for the Americans.

Meanwhile the "Peacock" was returning from a cruise not altogether void of interest. On parting with the "Hornet," she had struck off to the southward, and in the Straits of Sundra, between Borneo and Sumatra, had fallen in with the East India Company's cruiser "Nautilus," of fourteen guns. Between these two vessels an unfortunate and silly rencounter followed. The captain of the "Nautilus" knew of the declaration of peace; and, as the "Peacock" bore down upon his vessel, he shouted through a speaking-trumpet that peace had been declared. To this Capt. Warrington of the "Peacock" paid no attention, considering it a mere ruse on the part of the enemy, and responded by simply ordering the British to haul down their flag. This the Englishman very properly refused to do, and gallantly prepared for the unequal combat. Two

broadsides were then interchanged, by which the "Nautilus" was severely cut up, and eight of her crew killed. She then struck her colors. Capt. Warrington, on sending a boat aboard his adversary, found that the declaration of peace was no ruse, but a truthful statement of facts. His conduct had been almost criminally headstrong; and, though he was profuse in formal apologies, the wrong done could never be righted. The "Peacock" then continued her homeward voyage.

When this vessel reached port, the last of the cruisers had returned; and the war was over in fact, as it had long been over technically. It has become the fashion to say that it was a useless war, that served no purpose, because the treaty by which it was ended contained no reference to the hateful doctrine of the right of search, which, more than any thing else, had brought on the conflict. Yet, though the conduct of the war had not led the British to formally renounce their claims in this respect, the exploits of the American navy had shown that the Yankee blue-jackets were prepared to, and would, forcibly resent any attempt on the part of the British to put those claims into practice. The British had entered upon the war gaily, never dreaming that the puny American navy would offer any serious resistance to Great Britain's domination upon the ocean. Yet now, looking back over the three years of the war, they saw an array of naval battles, in the majority of which the Americans had been victorious; and in all of which the brilliancy of American naval tactics, the skill of the officers, and the courage and discipline of the crews, put the younger combatants on a plane with the older and more famous naval service. Fenimore Cooper, in his "History of the Navy of the United States," thus sums up the results of this naval war: "The navy came out of this struggle with a vast increase of reputation. The brilliant style in which the ships had been carried into action, the steadiness and accuracy with which they had been handled, and the fatal accuracy of their fire on nearly every occasion had produced a new era in naval warfare. Most of the frigate actions had been as soon decided as circumstances would at all allow; and in no instance was it found necessary to keep up the fire of a sloop-of-war an hour, when singly engaged. Most of the combats of the latter, indeed, were decided in about half that time. The execution done in these short conflicts was often equal to that made by the largest vessels of Europe in general

actions; and, in some of them, the slain and wounded comprised a very large proportion of their crews. . . . The ablest and bravest captains of the English fleet were ready to admit that a new power was about to appear upon the ocean, and that it was not improbable the battle for the mastery of the seas would have to be fought over again."

## CHAPTER XVII.

PRIVATEERS AND PRISONS OF THE WAR. — THE "ROSSIE." — SALEM PRIVATEERS. — THE "GEN. ARMSTRONG" GIVES BATTLE TO A BRITISH SQUADRON, AND SAVES NEW ORLEANS. — NARRATIVE OF A BRITISH OFFICER. — THE "PRINCE DE NEUFCHATEL." — EXPERIENCES OF AMERICAN PRISONERS OF WAR. — THE END.

NO narrative of the naval exploits of the Americans in the second war with Great Britain can be complete without some account of the achievements of the fleets of privateers which for three years swept the seas, destroying a vast amount of the enemy's property; and, while accomplishing their end by enriching their owners, did, nevertheless, much incidental good to the American cause. Seldom has the business of privateering been so extensively carried on as in the War of 1812. For this the reason lay in the rich bait offered by the world-wide commerce of Great Britain, whose fleets whitened every known sea. Privateering must ever be a weapon wielded by the weaker

nation against the stronger. And Congress, in the very Act by which it declared war, authorized the President to issue letters of marque and reprisal to private armed vessels.

The declaration of war had hardly been made public, when the hundreds of ship-yards from Maine to Savannah resounded with the blows of hammers and the grating of saws, as the shipwrights worked, busily refitting old vessels, or building new ones, destined to cruise against the commerce of John Bull. All sorts of vessels were employed in this service. The Atlantic and Gulf Coasts fairly swarmed with small pilot-boats, mounting one long gun amidships, and carrying crews of twenty to forty men. These little craft made rapid sallies into the waters of the Gulf Stream, in search of British West Indiamen homeward bound. Other privateers were huge three-masters, carrying heavy batteries, and able to outsail any of the enemy's ships. On leaving port for a long cruise, these vessels would carry enormous crews, so that captured vessels might be manned and sent home. After a successful cruise, such a privateer returned to port seldom bringing more than one-fifth of the crew with which she had set out. But the favorite rig for a privateer was that of the top-sail schooner, — such a rig as the "Enterprise" carried during the war with France. The famous ship-yards of Baltimore turned out scores of clean-cut, clipper-built schooners, with long, low hulls and raking masts, which straightway took to the ocean on privateering cruises. The armament of these vessels generally consisted of six to ten carronades and one long pivot-gun, going by the pet name of "Long Tom," mounted amidships. The crew was usually a choice assortment of cut-throats and seafaring vagabonds of all classes, — ready enough to fight if plunder was to be gained, but equally ready to surrender if only honor was to be gained by fighting. Yet history records a few actions in which the privateersmen showed a steadiness and courage worthy of seamen of the regular service.

The limitations of this work do not permit a complete account of the work of the privateers during the war. Although an interesting subject, and one of historical importance, but a few pages can be devoted to it here. Properly treated, it would fill a volume; and, indeed, one of the most noted privateersmen has left a narrative of the exploits of the principal privateers, which forms a very considerable tome. The fact that

two hundred and fifty private armed cruisers under the American flag captured or destroyed over sixteen hundred British vessels will indicate the importance and extent of the subject. For us a mere sketch of the exploits of some of the principal privateers must suffice.

One of the first things to attract the attention of the reader, in the dingy files of some newspaper of 1812–15, is the grotesque names under which many of the privateers sailed. The grandiloquent style of the regular navy vanishes, and in its place we find homely names; such as "Jack's Favorite," "Lovely Lass," "Row-boat," "Saucy Jack," or "True-blooded Yankee." Some names are clearly political allusions, — as the "Orders in Council" and the "Fair Trade." The "Black Joke," the "Shark," and the "Anaconda" must have had a grim significance for the luckless merchantmen who fell a prey to the vessels bearing these names. "Bunker Hill" and "Divided we fall," though odd names to sail under, seemed to bring luck to the two vessels, which were very successful in their cruises. "United we stand" was a luckless craft, however, taking only one prize; while the achievements of the "Full-blooded Yankee" and the "Sine qua non" were equally limited. Of the "Poor Sailor," certainly little was to be expected; and it is with no surprise that we find she captured only one prize.

Among the most successful privateers was the "Rossie" of Baltimore, commanded by the Revolutionary veteran Capt. Barney, who left her, finally, to assume command of the American naval forces on Chesapeake Bay. She was a clipper-built schooner, carrying fourteen guns, and a crew of one hundred and twenty men. The destruction wrought by this one cruiser was enormous. In a ninety days' cruise she captured, sunk, or otherwise destroyed British property to the amount of a million and a half dollars, and took two hundred and seventeen prisoners. All this was not done without some hard fighting. One prize — His Britannic Majesty's packet-ship "Princess Amelia" — was armed with nine-pounders, and made a gallant defence before surrendering. Several men were killed, and the "Rossie" suffered the loss of her first lieutenant. The prisoners taken by the "Rossie" were exchanged for Americans captured by the British. With the first body of prisoners thus exchanged, Barney sent a cool note to the British commander at New Brunswick, assuring him that before long a second batch of his captured countrymen should be sent in.

Several Northern seaports shared with Baltimore the business of fitting out and manning privateers. The hardy seamen of Maine and Massachusetts were ever ready for a profitable venture of this kind; and, as the continuation of the war caused the whale-fishery to languish, the sailors gladly took up the adventurous life of privateersmen. The profits of a successful cruise were enormous; and for days after the home-coming of a lucky privateer the little seaport into which she came rang with the boisterous shouts of the carousing sailors. "We still, in imagination, see our streets filled with privateersmen," writes a historian of Portsmouth, "in groups, with blue ribbons tied around their hats, inscribed in large letters, 'SUCCESS TO THE "FOX,"' or whatever vessel they were to sail in. And then another scene, of sailors paid off with so much money that they knew not what to do with it. It was one of these men that, in Market Square, put his arm around a cow, kissed her, and put a five-dollar bill in her mouth, for a good cud. Sometimes they might be seen, finely dressed, walking down the sunny streets, carrying parasols." One Portsmouth privateer came to grief in the West Indies, and was captured by a British vessel of heavier metal. In the hold of the privateer was a considerable sum of money in gold coin, the existence of which was known only to the captain and his body-servant, a bright negro. The British, on capturing the vessel, put a prize-crew on board, and, while taking the Yankee captain upon their own ship, left his negro servant on the prize. Watching his opportunity, the negro brought up the gold coin, and dropped it unobserved into a tub of greasy black slush with which he had been slushing down the masts. Some days later, the captured vessel reached the port to which she had been sent, and was tied up at a wharf to await condemnation. The faithful servant lingered about the ship for a time, saying that he had no place to go. At last he was gruffly ordered to leave; but, before going, he astonished the mate by begging for the tub of slush, which he said might enable him to earn a few cents along the docks. The mate carelessly told him to take the stuff, and be off; which he promptly did, carrying away with him his tub of slush, with its concealed treasure. It is worthy of note, that this negro, far from home and from the owners of the money, paid it into a bank to the credit of the captain whom he had served.

Salem, Mass., was another great port for privateers to hail from. Not

less than twenty-five of these predatory gentry fitted out at the quiet little seaside village; and, when the war was ended, few of the inhabitants were unable to tell some tale of personal adventures, cruising against the enemy. Indeed, Salem had the honor of receiving the first prize captured on the ocean after the declaration of war; for into the harbor came, on the 10th of June, 1812, the trim privateer schooner "Fame," followed close by two ships, from the halliards of which waved the British flag surmounted by the stars and stripes. Then the whole town turned out as one man to greet and cheer the captors; but, long before the war was ended, the appearance of a prize in the harbor aroused little excitement. One of the most successful of the rovers sailing from this port was the "Dolphin," whose record during the war shows a list of twenty-two captured vessels. Her faculty for making long cruises, and turning up in the most unexpected places, made her the dread of all British sea-captains. She was manned by a gallant set of lads, who had no fear of hard fighting; and many of her prizes were won at the cannon's mouth. In January, 1813, the "Dolphin" fell in with a British ship and brig cruising together off Cape St. Vincent. Though the enemy outnumbered the privateersmen, and carried heavier metal, yet the "Dolphin" went gallantly into the fight, and after a severe battle succeeded in taking both vessels. Great was the astonishment of the British at being thus snapped up by a Yankee privateer almost under the guns of the Rock of Gibraltar. The luckless Britons were carried to America as prisoners; but so kind was the treatment they met with at the hands of the privateers, that on leaving the "Dolphin," at Boston, they published a card in which they said, "Should the fortune of war ever throw Capt. Stafford or any of his crew into the hands of the British, it is sincerely hoped he will meet with similar treatment."

Perhaps the foremost of all the fighting privateers was the "Gen. Armstrong" of New York; a schooner mounting eight long nines and one long twenty-four on a pivot. She had a crew of ninety men, and was commanded on her first cruise by Capt. Guy R. Champlin. This vessel was one of the first to get to sea, and had cruised for several months with fair success, when in March, 1813, she gave chase to a sail off the Surinam River on the coast of South America. The stranger seemed to evince no great desire to escape; and the privateer soon gained

sufficiently to discover that the supposed merchantman was a British sloop-of-war, whose long row of open ports showed that she carried twenty-seven guns. Champlin and his men found this a more ugly customer than they had expected; but it was too late to retreat, and to surrender was out of the question: so, calling the people to the guns, Champlin took his ship into action with a steadiness that no old naval captain could have exceeded. "Close quarters and quick work," was the word passed along the gun-deck; and the "Armstrong" was brought alongside her antagonist at a distant of half pistol-shot. For nearly an hour the two vessels exchanged rapid broadsides; but, though the American gunners were the better marksmen, the heavy build of the sloop-of-war enabled her to stand against broadsides which would have cut the privateer to pieces. Capt. Champlin was hit in the shoulder early in the action, but kept his station until the fever of his wound forced him to retire to his cabin. However, he still continued to direct the course of the action; and, seeing that the tide of battle was surely going against him, he ordered the crew to get out the sweeps and pull away from the enemy, whose rigging was too badly cut up to enable her to give chase. This was quickly done; and the "Gen. Armstrong," though badly injured, and with her decks covered with dead and dying men, escaped, leaving her more powerful adversary to repair damages and make the best of her way home. Capt. Champlin, on his arrival at New York, was the hero of the hour. For a privateer to have held out for an hour against a man-of-war, was thought a feat worthy of praise from all classes of men. The merchants of the city tendered the gallant captain a dinner, and the stockholders in his vessel presented him with a costly sword.

But the "Gen. Armstrong" was destined to fight yet another battle, which should far eclipse the glory of her first. A new captain was to win the laurels this time; for Capt. Champlin's wound had forced him to retire, and his place was filled by Capt. Samuel C. Reid. On the 26th of September, 1814, the privateer was lying at anchor in the roadstead of Fayal. Over the land that enclosed the snug harbor on three sides, waved the flag of Portugal, a neutral power, but unfortunately one of insufficient strength to enforce the rights of neutrality. While the "Armstrong" was thus lying in the port, a British squadron, composed of the "Plantagenet" seventy-four, the "Rota" thirty-eight, and "Carnation"

eighteen, hove in sight, and soon swung into the harbor and dropped anchor. Reid watched the movements of the enemy with eager vigilance. He knew well that the protection of Portugal would not aid him in the least should the captain of that seventy-four choose to open fire upon the "Armstrong." The action of the British in coming into the harbor was in itself suspicious, and the American had little doubt that the safety of his vessel was in jeopardy. While he was pacing the deck, and weighing in his mind the probability of an assault by the British, he caught sight of some unusual stir aboard the hostile ships. It was night; but the moon had risen, and by its pale light Reid saw four large barges let fall from the enemy's ships, and, manned by about forty men each, make toward his vessel. In an instant every man on the privateer was called to his post. That there was to be an attack, was now certain; and the Americans determined not to give up their vessel without at least a vigorous attempt to defend her. Reid's first act was to warp his craft under the guns of a rather dilapidated castle, which was supposed to uphold the authority of Portugal over the island and adjacent waters. Hardly had the position been gained, when the foremost of the British boats came within hail, and Capt. Reid shouted, "Boat ahoy! What boat's that?" No response followed the hail; and it was repeated, with the warning, "Answer, or I shall fire into you." Still the British advanced without responding; and Reid, firmly convinced that they purposed to carry his ship with a sudden dash, ordered his gunners to open on the boats with grape. This was done, and at the first volley the British turned and made off. Capt. Reid then warped his vessel still nearer shore; and bending springs on her cable, so that her broadside might be kept always toward the enemy, he awaited a second attack. At midnight the enemy were seen advancing again, this time with fourteen barges and about five hundred men. While the flotilla was still at long range, the Americans opened fire upon them with the heavy "Long Tom;" and, as they came nearer, the full battery of long nine-pounders took up the fight. The carnage in the advancing boats was terrible; but the plucky Englishmen pushed on, meeting the privateer's fire with volleys of musketry and carronades. Despite the American fire, the British succeeded in getting under the bow and quarter of the "Armstrong," and strove manfully to board; while the Americans fought no less bravely to keep them back. The attack became a furious hand-to-hand

battle. From behind the boarding-nettings the Americans thrust pikes, and fired pistols and muskets, at their assailants, who, mounted on each other's shoulders, were hacking fiercely at the nettings which kept them from gaining the schooner's deck. The few that managed to clamber on the taffrail of the "Armstrong" were thrust through and through with pikes, and hurled, thus horribly impaled, into the sea. The fighting was fiercest and deadliest on the quarter; for there were most of the enemy's boats, and there Capt. Reid led the defence in person. So hot was the reception met by the British at this point, that they drew off in dismay, despairing of ever gaining the privateer's deck. Hardly did Reid see the enemy thus foiled on the quarter, when a chorus of British cheers from the forecastle, mingled with yells of rage, told that the enemy had succeeded in effecting a lodgement there. Calling his men about him, the gallant captain dashed forward and was soon in the front rank of the defenders, dealing furious blows with his cutlass, and crying out, "Come on, my lads, and we'll drive them into the sea." The leadership of an officer was all that the sailors needed. The three lieutenants on the forecastle had been killed or disabled, else the enemy had never come aboard. With Reid to cheer them on, the sailors rallied, and with a steady advance drove the British back into their boats. The disheartened enemy did not return to the attack, but returned to their ships, leaving behind two boats captured and two sunk. Their loss in the attack was thirty-four killed and eighty-six wounded. On the privateer were two killed and seven wounded.

But the attack was not to end here. Reid was too old a sailor to expect that the British, chagrined as they were by two repulses, were likely to leave the privateer in peace. He well knew that the withdrawal of the barges meant not an abandonment, but merely a short discontinuance, of the attack. Accordingly he gave his crew scarcely time to rest, before he set them to work getting the schooner in trim for another battle. The wounded were carried below, and the decks cleared of splinters and wreckage. The boarding-nettings were patched up, and hung again in place. "Long Tom" had been knocked off his carriage by a carronade shot, and had to be remounted; but all was done quickly, and by morning the vessel was ready for whatever might be in store for her. The third assault was made soon after daybreak. Evidently the enemy despaired of

his ability to conquer the privateersmen in a hand-to-hand battle; for this time he moved the brig "Carnation" up within range, and opened fire upon the schooner. The man-of-war could fire nine guns at a broadside, while the schooner could reply with but seven; but "Long Tom" proved the salvation of the privateer. The heavy twenty-four-pound shots from this gun did so much damage upon the hull of the brig, that she was forced to draw out of the action; leaving the victory, for the third time, with the Americans.

But now Capt. Reid decided that it was folly to longer continue the conflict. The overwhelming force of the enemy made any thought of ultimate escape folly. It only remained for the British to move the seventy-four "Plantagenet" into action to seal the doom of the Yankee privateer. The gallant defence already made by the Americans had cost the British nearly three hundred men in killed and wounded; and Reid now determined to destroy his vessel, and escape to the shore. The great pivot-gun was accordingly pointed down the main hatch, and two heavy shots sent crashing through the bottom. Then applying the torch, to make certain the work of destruction, the privateersmen left the ship, giving three cheers for the gallant "Gen. Armstrong," as a burst of flame and a roar told that the flames had reached her magazine.

This gallant action won loud plaudits for Capt. Reid when the news reached the United States. Certainly no vessel of the regular navy was ever more bravely or skilfully defended than was the "Gen. Armstrong." But, besides the credit won for the American arms, Reid had unknowingly done his country a memorable service. The three vessels that attacked him were bound to the Gulf of Mexico, to assist in the attack upon New Orleans. The havoc Reid wrought among their crews, and the damage he inflicted upon the "Carnation," so delayed the New Orleans expedition, that Gen. Jackson was able to gather those motley troops that fought so well on the plains of Chalmette. Had it not been for the plucky fight of the lads of the "Gen. Armstrong," the British forces would have reached New Orleans ten days earlier, and Packenham's expedition might have ended very differently.

The "Plantagenet" and her consorts were not the only British men-of-war bound for New Orleans that fell in with warlike Yankee privateers. Some of the vessels from the Chesapeake squadron met a privateer, and

a contest ensued, from which the American emerged with less glory than did the lads of the "Gen. Armstrong." A young British officer in his journal thus tells the story: —

"It was my practice to sit for hours, after nightfall, upon the taff-rail, and strain my eyes in the attempt to distinguish objects on shore, or strange sails in the distance. It so happened that on the 30th I was tempted to indulge in this idle but bewitching employment even beyond my usual hour for retiring, and did not quit the deck till towards two o'clock in the morning of the 31st [of October]. I had just entered my cabin, and was beginning to undress, when a cry from above of an enemy in chase drew me instantly to the quarter-deck. On looking astern I perceived a vessel making directly after us, and was soon convinced of the justice of the alarm, by a shot which whistled over our heads. All hands were now called to quarters, the small sails taken in; and having spoken to our companion, and made an agreement as to position, both ships cleared for action. But the stranger, seeing his signal obeyed with so much alacrity, likewise slackened sail, and, continuing to keep us in view, followed our wake without approaching nearer. In this state things continued till daybreak, — we still holding our course, and he hanging back; but, as soon as it was light, he set more sail and ran to windward, moving just out of gun-shot in a parallel direction with us. It was now necessary to fall upon some plan of deceiving him; otherwise, there was little probability that he would attack. In the bomb, indeed, the height of the bulwarks served to conceal some of the men; but in the transport no such screen existed. The troops were therefore ordered below; and only the sailors, a few blacks, and the officers kept the deck. The same expedient was likewise adopted in part by Capt. Price of the 'Volcano;' and, in order to give to his ship a still greater resemblance than it already had to a merchantman, he displayed an old faded scarlet ensign, and drew up his fore and main sail in what sailors term a lubberly manner.

"As yet the stranger had shown no colors, but from her build and rigging there was little doubt as to her country. She was a beautiful schooner, presenting seven ports of a side, and apparently crowded with men, — circumstances which immediately led us to believe that she was an American privateer. The 'Volcano,' on the other hand, was a clumsy, strong-built

ship, carrying twelve guns; and the 'Golden Fleece' mounted eight: so that in point of artillery the advantage was rather on our side; but the American's sailing was so much superior to that of either of us, that this advantage was more than counter-balanced.

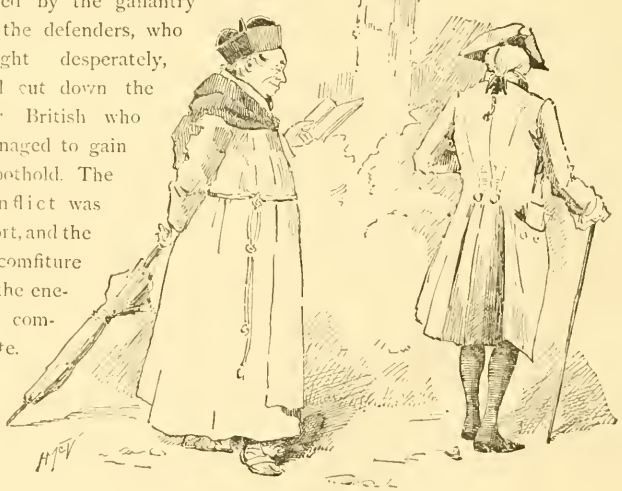
"Having dodged us till eight o'clock, and reconnoitred with great exactness, the stranger began to steer gradually nearer and nearer, till at length it was judged that she was within range. A gun was accordingly fired from the 'Volcano,' and another from the transport; the balls from both of which passed over her, and fell into the sea. Finding herself thus assaulted, she now threw off all disguise, and hung out an American ensign. When putting her helm up, she poured a broadside with a volley of musketry into the transport, and ran alongside of the bomb, which sailed to windward.

"As soon as her flag was displayed, and her intention of attacking discerned, all hands were ordered up; and she received two well-directed broadsides from the 'Volcano,' as well as a warm salute from the 'Golden Fleece.' But such was the celerity of her motion, that she was alongside of the bomb in less time than can be imagined, and actually dashing her bow against the other, attempted to carry her by boarding. Capt. Price, however, was ready to receive them. The boarders were at their posts in an instant; and Jonathan finding, to use a vulgar phrase, that he had caught a Tartar, left about twenty men upon the 'Volcano's' bowsprit, all of whom were thrown into the sea, and filling his sails sheered off with the same speed with which he had borne down. In attempting to escape, he unavoidably fell somewhat to leeward, and exposed the whole of his deck to the fire of the transport. A tremendous discharge of musketry saluted him as he passed; and it was almost laughable to witness the haste with which his crew hurried below, leaving none upon deck except such as were absolutely wanted to work the vessel.

"The 'Volcano' had by this time filled and gave chase, firing with great precision at his yards and rigging, in the hope of disabling him. But, as fortune would have it, none of his important ropes or yards were cut; and we had the mortification to see him in a few minutes beyond our reach."

An exploit of yet another privateer should be chronicled before the subject of the private armed navy can be dismissed. On the 11th of October,

1814, the brigantine privateer "Prince de Neufchatel," seventeen guns, was encountered near Nantucket by the British frigate "Endymion," — the same ship which was so roughly handled by the "President" in her last battle. About nine o'clock at night, a calm having come on, the frigate despatched a boarding party of a hundred and eleven men in five boats to capture the privateer. The latter vessel was shorthanded, having but forty men; but this handful of Yankee tars gallantly prepared to meet the attack. The guns were charged with grape and canister, the boarding-nettings triced up, and cutlasses and pistols distributed to the crew. As the British came on, the Americans opened fire, notwithstanding which the enemy dashed alongside, and strove fiercely to gain the deck. But in this they were foiled by the gallantry of the defenders, who fought desperately, and cut down the few British who managed to gain a foothold. The conflict was short, and the discomfiture of the enemy complete.



PRISON CHAPLAIN AND JAILOR.

After but a few minutes' fighting, one boat was sunk, one captured, and the other three drifted helplessly away, filled with dead and dying. The total loss of the British in this affair was twenty-eight killed and thirty-seven wounded. Of the crew of the privateer, seven were killed, and nine only remained unhurt.

A narrative of the exploits of, and service done by, the American sailors in the War of 1812 would be incomplete if it said nothing of the sufferings of that great body of tars who spent the greater part of the war season confined in British prisons. Several thousand of these were thrown into confinement before the war broke out, because they refused to serve against their country in British ships. Others were prisoners of war. No exact statistics as to the number of Americans thus imprisoned have ever been made public; but the records of one great prison — that at Dartmoor — show, that, when the war closed, six thousand American seamen were imprisoned there, twenty-five hundred of whom had been detained from long before the opening of the war, on account of their refusal to join the ranks of the enemy. As I write, there lies before me a quaint little book, put out anonymously in 1815, and purporting to be the "Journal of a Young Man captured by the British." Its author, a young surgeon of Salem, named Waterhouse, shipped on a Salem privateer, and was captured early in the war. His experience with British prisons and transport-ships was long; and against his jailors he brings shocking charges of brutality, cruelty, and negligence.

The Yankee seamen who were captured during the war were first consigned to receiving-prisons at the British naval stations in America. Sometimes these places of temporary detention were mouldering hulks, moored in bays or rivers; sometimes huge sheds hastily put together, and in which the prisoners were kept only by the unceasing vigilance of armed guards. "The prison at Halifax," writes Waterhouse, "erected solely for the safe-keeping of prisoners of war, resembles an horse-stable, with stalls, or stanchions, for keeping the cattle from each other. It is to a contrivance of this sort that they attach the cords that support those canvas bags or cradles, called hammocks. Four tier of these hanging nests were made to hang, one above the other, between these stalls, or stanchions. . . . The general hum and confused noise from almost every hammock was at first very distressing. Some would be lamenting their hard fate at being shut up like negro slaves in a Guinea ship, or like fowls in a hen-coop, for no crime, but for fighting the battles of their country; others, late at night, were relating their adventures to a new prisoner; others, lamenting their aberrations from rectitude, and disobedience to parents, and headstrong wilfulness, that drove them to sea,

contrary to their parents' wish; while others, of the younger class, were sobbing out their lamentations at the thoughts of what their mothers and sisters suffered after knowing of their imprisonment. Not unfrequently the whole night was spent in this way; and when, about daybreak, the weary prisoner fell into a doze, he was waked from his slumber by the grinding noise of the locks, and the unbarring of the doors, with the cry of '*Turn out! All out!*' when each man took down his hammock, and lashed it up, and slung it on his back, and was ready to answer to the roll-call of the turnkey."

From prisons such as this, the prisoners were conveyed in droves to England, in the holds of men-of-war and transports. Poorly fed, worse housed, and suffering for lack of air and room, their agony on the voyage was terrible. When they were allowed a few hours' time on deck, they were sure to arouse the anger of the officers by turbulent conduct or imprudent retorts. "One morning as the general and the captain of the 'Regulus' (transport) were walking as usual on the quarter-deck, one of our Yankee boys passed along the galley with his kid of burgoo. He rested it on the hatchway while he adjusted the rope ladder to descend with his swill. The thing attracted the attention of the general, who asked the man how many of his comrades eat of that quantity for their breakfast. 'Six, sir,' said the man, 'but it is fit food only for hogs.' This answer affronted the captain, who asked the man in an angry tone, 'What part of America he came from?' 'Near to Bunker Hill, sir, if you ever heard of that place,' was the answer." On another occasion, a Yankee and a slightly wounded British marine got into a dispute, and came to blows. The British captain saw the occurrence, and accused the American of cowardice in striking a wounded man. "I am no coward, sir," said the Yankee. "I was captain of a gun on board the 'Constitution' when she captured the 'Guerriere,' and afterward when she took the 'Java.' Had I been a coward, I should not have been there."

On one occasion the prisoners on the transport "Crown Prince," lying in the River Medway, took an uncontrollable dislike to the commander of a second transport lying close alongside. Their spite was gratified quickly and with great effect. The rations served out to the luckless captives at that time consisted of fish and cold potatoes. The latter edible being of rather poor quality, the prisoners reserved for missiles; and the obnoxious

officer could not pace his quarter-deck without being made a mark for a shower of potatoes. Vainly did he threaten to call up his marines and respond with powder and lead: the Americans were not to be kept down; and for some days the harassed officer hardly dared to show himself upon deck.

The place of final detention for most of the prisoners taken in the war with America was Dartmoor Prison; a rambling collection of huge frame buildings, surrounded by double walls of wood. The number of prisoners confined there, and the length of time which many of them had spent within its walls, gave this place many of the characteristics of a small State, with rulers and officials of its own. One of the strangest characters of the prison was King Dick, a gigantic negro, who ruled over the five or six hundred negro prisoners. "He is six feet five inches in height," says one of the prisoners, "and proportionally large. This black Hercules commands respect, and his subjects tremble in his presence. He goes the rounds every day, and visits every berth, to see if they all are kept clean. When he goes the rounds, he puts on a large bear-skin cap, and carries in his hand a huge club. If any of his men are dirty, drunken, or grossly negligent, he threatens them with a beating; and if they are saucy they are sure to receive one. They have several times conspired against him, and attempted to dethrone him; but he has always conquered the rebels. One night several attacked him while asleep in his hammock: he sprang up, and seized the smallest by his feet, and thumped another with him. The poor negro, who had thus been made a beetle of, was carried the next day to the hospital, sadly bruised, and provokingly laughed at." King Dick, to further uphold his dignity as a monarch, had his private chaplain, who followed his royal master about, and on Sundays preached rude but vigorous sermons to His Majesty's court. On week-days the court was far from being a dignified gathering. King Dick was a famous athlete, and in the cock-loft, over which he reigned, was to be seen fine boxing and fencing. Gambling, too, was not ruled out of the royal list of amusements; and the cries of the players, mingled with the singing of the negroes, and the sounds of the musical instruments upon which they played, made that section of the prison a veritable pandemonium.

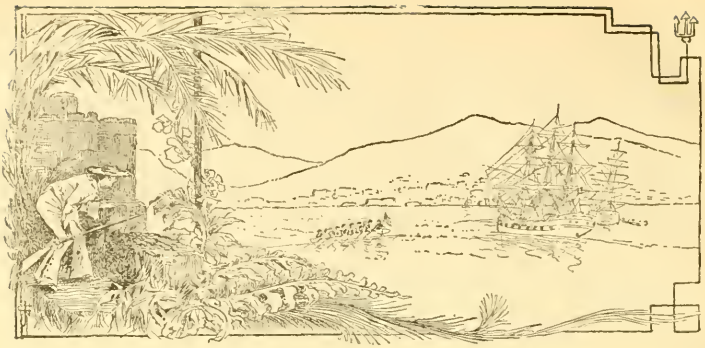
But although some few incidents occurred to brighten momentarily the dull monotony of the prisoners' lot, the life of these unfortunate men,

while thus imprisoned, was miserable and hateful to them. Months passed, and even years, but there seemed to be no hope for release. At last came the news of the declaration of peace. How great then was the rejoicing! Thoughts of home, of friends and kindred, flooded the minds of all; and even strong men, whom the hardships of prison-life had not broken down, seemed to give way all at once to tears of joy. But the delays of official action, "red-tape," and the sluggishness

THE LAST VOLLEY OF THE WAR.

of travel in that day, kept the poor fellows pent up for months after the treaty of peace had been announced to them. Nor were they to escape without suffering yet more severely at the hands of their jailors. Three months had passed since peace had been declared; and the long delay so irritated the prisoners, that they chafed under prison restraint, and showed evidences of a mutinous spirit. The guards, to whom was intrusted the difficult task of keeping in subjection six thousand impatient

and desperate men, grew nervous, fearing that at any moment the horde of prisoners would rise and sweep away all before them. An outbreak was imminent; and the prisoners were like a magazine of gunpowder, needing but a spark of provocation to explode. On April 6, 1815, matters reached a crisis. The soldiers, losing all presence of mind, fired on the defenceless Americans, killing five men and wounding thirty-four. Thus the last blood shed in the War of 1812 was the blood of unarmed prisoners. But the massacre, horrible and inexcusable as it was, had the effect of hastening the release of the survivors; and soon the last of the captives was on his way home to the country over which peace at last reigned again.



## CHAPTER XVIII.

THE LONG PEACE BROKEN BY THE WAR WITH MEXICO.—ACTIVITY OF THE NAVY.—CAPTAIN STOCKTON'S STRATAGEM.—THE BATTLE AT SAN JOSÉ —THE BLOCKADE.—INSTANCES OF PERSONAL BRAVERY.—THE LOSS OF THE "TRUXTON."—YELLOW FEVER IN THE SQUADRON.—THE NAVY AT VERA CRUZ—CAPTURE OF ALVARADO.

THE period of peace which followed the close of the War of 1812 was, perhaps, the longest which any nation has ever enjoyed. For the navy of the United States, it was a time of absolute peace, inactivity, even stagnation. The young nation was living literally up to Washington's rule of avoiding entanglements abroad, and its people looked with suspicion on the naval branch of the service which had rendered such a good account of itself in the war with Great Britain. They feared to build and man ships lest possession of a navy might prove an incentive to war. And so when war did come—war, not with Europe, but with our nearest neighbor—the United States had little floating force to join in it. Fortunately, little was needed.

Though war was not declared by the United States against Mexico until May, 1846, it had been a possibility ever since the establishment of the Texan Republic by the defeat of the Mexicans at San Jacinto in 1834, and it had been a great probability since 1841, when it was discovered that both England and France were holding out prospects of assistance to the Mexi

cans in case of conflict with the United States. Neither of these European powers was sincere in the diplomatic game which deceived the proud but ignorant Mexicans, but neither did either of them scruple to foment a quarrel out of which some selfish, though indefinite, advantage might be gained. Indeed they played the diplomatic game so skilfully that they deceived a considerable minority in the United States and made these believe that the admission of Texas to the United States would be unwise and inexpedient, and the probable war with Mexico a wickedness dire and dreadful. Even General Grant, when he wrote his book, said that such were his views at the time, though he was then an army officer and trusting to war for advancement. But when hostilities were begun, and victory for American arms followed victory, the protests of the peace party were unheard amid the enthusiastic shoutings of those who took a saner view of the conditions which led to the conflict.

Mexico claimed title not only to Texas, but to California, and if the United States had not gone to war in regard to the former, she would have had to do so in defence of her conquest of the latter. In securing California the navy bore a conspicuous part, and as early as 1842, Captain Thomas Ap-Catesby Jones, commanding the Pacific squadron, was as active as though war had already been declared. In September of that year, with his squadron of four ships, he was at anchor in the harbor of Callao, and noticing the suspicious conduct of the British frigate "Dublin," which shoved off the port and then bore away, he concluded to follow her and see just what game she sought, as he had been informed by the Navy Department that England was plotting in Mexico against the United States; he had also read in a Mexican newspaper that war was likely to be declared, if indeed hostilities had not already begun. Captain Jones reached Monterey on the 19th of October, and though he saw nothing of the "Dublin," he at once insisted on the surrender of the place. The next day he learned that his action had been premature and made what amends he could. So the navy really struck the first official blow that led to this war.

When war had been declared, the Pacific squadron did not learn of it until after the victories of Palo Alto and Resaca de la Palma. Captain Sloat, in command, at once took prompt action. Landing two hundred and fifty seamen and marines under Captain Mervine, he captured Monterey on

the 2d of July. A week later he formally took possession of the splendid bay of San Francisco and the neighboring country. He also occupied Sutter's Fort, on Sacramento River, and the towns of Bodega and Sonoma. In this war it will be noticed throughout this narrative that the naval forces were constantly required to do shore duty, a duty to which they were unaccustomed but which they performed with entire efficiency. The Mexicans had no navy worthy of the name and the American sailors were auxiliary to the soldiers. Though untrained to this kind of service, and though it was always hard, and sometimes quite ungrateful, they responded to orders with entire cheerfulness; when the service was most perilous then the blue-jackets entered upon it with a gayety that laughed at danger.

On the 19th of July, Fremont and his corps of topographical engineers met Captain Sloat and thereafter co-operated with him. In the "Cyane," Commander Du Pont, Fremont was sent to San Diego with one hundred and fifty riflemen and that place was occupied. On the 30th of July, the "Congress" took possession of San Pedro, the port of Los Angeles, the seat of the Mexican government in California. About this time the command of the Pacific squadron devolved upon Captain Robert F. Stockton, who was not a whit less vigilant than his predecessors had been. Having all the California seaports, Captain Stockton planned an expedition against Los Angeles before the well-armed Mexican soldiers in the province could be brought together. He landed three hundred and fifty sailors and marines and established a camp at San Pedro. Captain Stockton's biographer says: "There were only about ninety muskets in the whole corps. Some of the men were armed with carbines, others had only pistols, swords, or boarding-pikes. They presented a motley and peculiar appearance, with great variety of costume. Owing to their protracted absence from home the supplies of shoes and clothing had fallen short, and the ragged and diversified colors of their garments, as well as the want of uniformity in their arms and accoutrements, made them altogether a spectacle both singular and amusing." The Mexican forces at Los Angeles outnumbered Captain Stockton's land forces three to one, so he resorted to a stratagem to deceive the enemy as to his force. A flag of truce having appeared on the hills, "he ordered all his men under arms and directed them to march three or four abreast, with intervals of considerable space between each squad, directly in the line of vision of the approaching messengers, to

the rear of some buildings on the beach, and thence to turn in a circle and continue their march until the strangers had arrived. Part of the circle described in the march was concealed from view, so that to the strangers it would appear that a force ten times greater than the actual number was defiling before them. When the two bearers of the flag of truce had arrived he ordered them to be led up to him alongside of the artillery, which consisted of several six-pounders and one thirty-two-pound carronade. The guns were all covered with skins so as to conceal their dimensions except the huge mouth of the thirty-two-pounder at which the captain was stationed to receive his guests. . . . As his purpose was intimidation he received them with much sternness." They asked for a truce, but Stockton demanded and secured an immediate and absolute surrender, as the evident object of the Mexicans was to gain time. Stockton at once began his tedious march to Los Angeles, his men dragging the cannon through the sand. On the 12th of August, he received a message from the Mexican general, saying "if he marched on the town he would find it the grave of his men." He replied: "Then tell your general to have the bells ready to toll at eight o'clock in the morning. I shall be there at that time." He was as good as his word. The next morning he was joined by Fremont and his men, who had come up from San Diego and they entered Los Angeles unopposed. He organized a civil government for the entire state, with Major Fremont as the head of it, and returning to his ships sailed northward on the 5th of September, 1846. The news of these operations was sent to Washington overland by the famous scout, Kit Carson.

Meantime the other ships of the Pacific squadron were cruising along the coast and capturing everything with a semblance of Mexican ownership. But Captain Stockton was much disconcerted in October to learn that two Mexican generals, released on parole after the fall of Los Angeles, had gathered a force and were besieging the small garrison there. The "Savannah" at once went to the scene. At San Pedro it was learned that the garrison had been compelled to capitulate and was awaiting an American cruiser. Captain Mervine, of the "Savannah," landed a detachment of sailors and marines and began the march to the capital. He could not cope with the superior force and had to retire. Indeed nearly all the places captured by the active sailors seemed likely now to fall into the hands of the Mexicans again.

The garrison at Monterey was threatened by an uprising of the people; the garrison at San Diego was besieged; Los Angeles was in the hands of the enemy, and the force at the enemy's camp at San Bernardino was getting stronger each day. But Captain Stockton was equal to all demands upon him and made up for inadequate forces by celerity of movement. Just when matters were most critical the naval forces learned of the repulse of General Stephen Kearny by the Mexicans under Pico. It was indeed with great difficulty that Kearny and his dragoons were rescued by the sailors from their invested position near San Bernardino.

Having got what men he could together, Captain Stockton determined to recapture Los Angeles. On the 29th of December, 1846, he began his march of 145 miles to the capital. There were no roads, but the route was through deep ravines, sand-hills, and deserts. The men were poorly armed and badly clothed, and there were few horses to assist in drawing the artillery. Never did an American commander have before him a more disagreeable prospect. The men, many of them without foot-covering, became worn-out in the march and begged to rest, but the captain insisted that they must go on, as the Mexicans were getting stronger every day. The men responded as best they could.

On the 7th of January, the intrepid Stockton found that the enemy was intrenched between him and the San Gabriel River. The Mexican general changed his mind and crossed the river with the object of interrupting the crossing. But Stockton would not be denied, and repulsed the enemy on every side, though outnumbered three to one. This was on the 8th of January, the anniversary of the battle of New Orleans. The next day he fought again, resisting three furious charges of the enemy. On the 10th he entered Los Angeles unopposed, and on the 15th he was joined there by Fremont and his corps. These seaports in California were not seriously harassed during the remainder of the war, but they needed to be garrisoned, while the whole coast required watching. A part of the squadron was sent south and also into the Bay of California. Before the end of 1847 every Mexican gun on the western coast, save those at Acapulco, had been silenced. Loreto, La Paz, Mazatlan, San Blas, Manzanilla, San Antonio, Guaymas, and Mulye fell to the squadron. Sometimes it only needed for a ship or two to appear before a town and it would surrender, but generally an assault or the

appearance of a storming party on land was necessary. But the seamen and marines were always invincible in this part of the war, where they were entirely without aid from the army.

The most serious predicament in which the Americans found themselves in this Pacific Coast campaign was when Lieutenant Heywood, of the "Dale," with four midshipmen and twenty marines, were shut up in the Mission House at San José, a small village near San Lucas. He was surrounded by a large force before he knew it, and two of his midshipmen were taken unawares and captured by an enemy not known to be near. Lieutenant Heywood maintained himself from the 19th of November, 1847, till the 17th of February, 1848, when Commander Du Pont, in the "Cyane," came to his rescue. A party of ninety-four seamen and marines, under Lieutenant Rowan, went ashore and fought its way against six hundred Mexicans until they were defeated and Heywood and his men rescued. There was nothing after this on the western coast more serious than guerilla forays.

The operations on the western coast were probably, in result, much more important than those of the home squadron in the Mexican Gulf and the Rio Grande River. But the latter squadron was the larger, and as it was in constant co-operation with the conquering armies which finally captured the capital of the country, much more has been heard of the doings of the fleet in the east, which was at first commanded by Commodore David Conner and then by Commodore Matthew C. Perry. The operations on this coast also came in for much criticism, for the various ships were filled with young men overflowing with valor and mad with desire of glory. They were also comparatively close to home and saw the newspapers from New York, Washington, and New Orleans. In these papers the army was accorded all the glory while the navy was almost ignored. This neglect rankled in the minds of the madcaps, and they blamed Commodore Conner, an officer of much experience and distinguished record, for not storming every fort and citadal near the coast instead of carrying out his instructions to maintain an efficient blockade of the ports and to co-operate with the army whenever possible. These duties, tiresome and inglorious as they seemed, were of the first importance to the scheme of the campaign, and they were performed with a patience which rose superior to weariness, sickness, and death. The duty required of the blockaders did not require much fighting, but the men were in danger of

the coast fevers all the time, and hundreds died. And then at some seasons the fleet was likely to be blown ashore by the fierce "northers" which prevailed. Many accidents resulted during these storms, the most serious being the capsizing of the brig "Somers," Lieutenant Raphael Semmes (afterward commanding the Confederate ship "Alabama") commanding, and the loss of more than half her crew.

When the war began at Palo Alto, Commodore Conner was with his squadron off Point Isabel, at the mouth of the Rio Grande River. Not knowing the issue of the battle, five hundred seamen and marines were sent to strengthen the garrison at Point Isabel, where the army supplies were stored, while Captain Aulick, of the "Potomac," with two hundred men, pulled up the Rio Grande in boats for fifteen miles and until a junction with the army was established at Barita. At this time the squadron consisted of the frigates "Cumberland" (flagship), "Potomac," and "Raritan"; the steam frigate "Mississippi"; the sloops-of-war "Falmouth," "John Adams," and "St. Mary's"; the steam-sloop "Princeton"; and the brigs "Lawrence," "Porpoise," and "Somers." Before the close of the war some of these ships were recalled, at least one was wrecked, and the squadron was from time to time largely reinforced.

The squadron, now that war had begun, was ordered to blockade the ports of Matamoras, on the Rio Grande; Tampico, on the Tampico River; Alvarado, on the Alvarado; Coatzalcoalcos, on the river of the same name; Tabasco, on the Tabasco River; and Vera Cruz, on the Gulf. The rivers mentioned, except the Rio Grande, are mere creeks, not fit for vessels of any size, and their mouths simply open roadsteads. Vera Cruz was the only place with anything like a harbor. The ports in Yucatan, such as Laguna and Campeachy, were only visited for supplies of fresh meat. The State of Yucatan was not assisting in the war and did not need to be blockaded. By the time General Taylor took possession of Matamoras, Commodore Conner's fleet had been considerably augmented by the addition of the sloops-of-war "Germantown," "Albany," "Saratoga" and "Decatur"; the steamers "Spitfire," "Vixen," "Alleghany," "Scorpion" and "Scourge"; the brig "Truxton"; the gunboats "Reefer," "Bonita," and "Rebel." A little later, and just before the bombardment of Vera Cruz, the "Ohio," with seventy-four guns, joined, together with the bomb-vessels "Vesuvius," "Hecla," and "Strom

boli." There were also a number of small steamers and gunboats to operate in shallow water. These constituted what was called the "mosquito fleet." With so formidable a fleet the sailors felt they were equal to anything, and whenever a larger part of it was operating at one place, it was difficult to restrain the men. The youngsters even thought Commodore Conner's prudence and conservatism to be timidity, and the writer has before him now a book written twenty-five years after these events, by one who was a midshipman on the flagship, and he quotes the familiar lines about daring to put things to the touch. All this was most unfair, but it indicated that the blue jackets of the Mexican War were buttoned over hearts that knew no fear.

The blockade of the Mexican ports that was maintained was not by any means a paper blockade. It was actual, and the very opposite of the merely formal closing of ports which the United States had so long protested against in other countries. The hardships of the men and officers were fearful and the casualties very great. The tediousness of the service was relieved now and again by daring expeditions into the rivers and ports, where boats were cut out and taken away from beneath batteries on shore. The record of such ventures shows that the navy in 1846 and 1847 was no whit inferior in dash to the one which made the flag glorious some years before in the war with England. One instance of such a venture is quoted from the "Recollections of a Naval Officer," by Captain William Harwar Parker. He was telling of the blockade at Vera Cruz in 1846. He says: "One of the finest fellows in the service I often met on Green Island. I allude to Passed Midshipman Hynson, of Maryland. He was drowned in the brig 'Somers,' when she capsized in the fall of this year. At the time of her sinking, Hynson had both of his arms bandaged and in a sling, and was almost helpless. It was said that when the brig sank he managed to get hold of a spar with another man, and finding it would not support two he deliberately let go his hold. It was like him. The way he happened to have his arm in a sling was this: While the 'Somers' was maintaining the blockade of Vera Cruz, a vessel managed to slip in—I think she was a Spanish schooner. The Mexicans moored her to the walls of the Castle of San Juan for safety; but the officers of the 'Somers' resolved to cut her out or burn her. Hynson was the leading spirit in the affair, though Lieu-

tenant James Parker, of Pennsylvania, was the senior officer. They took a boat one afternoon and pulled in to visit the officers of an English man-of-war lying under Sacrificios Island. It was quite usual to do this. After nightfall they left the British ship and pulled directly for the schooner, which they boarded and carried. This, be it observed, was directly under the guns of the castle and the muskets of its garrison. The crew was secured, and finding the wind would not serve to take the vessel out, it was resolved to burn her. Her captain made some resistance, and the sentinel on the walls called out to know what was the matter. Parker, who spoke Spanish remarkably well, replied that his men were drunk and he was putting them in irons. The party then set fire to the vessel and got safely away with their prisoners. It was in setting fire to the schooner that Hynson got so badly burned."

In regard to the personal heroism shown by Hynson and others when the "Somers" went down, Lieutenant Raphael Semmes, in his book, "Service Afloat and Ashore During the Mexican War," said: "Those men who could not swim were selected to go into the boat. A large man by the name of Seymour, the ship's cook, having got into her, he was commanded by Lieutenant Parker to come out, in order that he might make room for two smaller men, and he *obeyed the order*. He was afterward permitted to return to her, however, when it was discovered that he could not swim. Passed Midshipman Hynson, a promising young officer, who had been partially disabled by a bad burn received in firing the 'Creole' a few days previously, was particularly implored to go into the boat. A lad by the name of Nutter jumped out of the boat and offered his place to Hynson, and a man by the name of Powers did the same thing. Hynson refusing both offers, these men declared that then others might take their places, as they were resolved to abide in the wreck with him. Hynson and Powers were drowned. Nutter was saved. When the plunge was made into the sea, Sailing-Master Clemson seized a studding-sail boom, in company with five of the seamen. Being a swimmer, and perceiving that the boom was not sufficiently buoyant to suppport them all, he left it and struck out alone. He perished—the five men were saved."

Just about this time the first of the gunboats reached the squadron, and the young men of the steerage were intensely amused at the smallness of the

vessel. A midshipman from the flagship visited the "Reefer." He went alongside of her in the barge, and, not knowing any better, stepped over her port-quarter. Lieutenant Sterrett, in command, said in his least gentle voice: "Sir, there is a gangway to this vessel!" Before long even the youngsters learned to respect these little steamers. Commodore Conner now made an expedition to capture Alvarado, but just as he was about ready to begin a bombardment his pilots predicted a "norther," and he hoisted the signal, "Return to the anchorage off Vera Cruz." This was popularly regarded as a *fiasco*, but doubtless the Commodore was entirely right, as Alvarado might be taken at any time, and subsequently was taken in a manner which has been a joke in the navy ever since. Of this something will presently be said. Tampico, a town of 7,000 inhabitants, 210 miles north of Vera Cruz, was next proceeded against. The bar at the mouth of the Tampico River is considered the most dangerous on the coast, and the larger vessels did not try to cross it. But the smaller steamers and gunboats of the "mosquito fleet" went in, and the town was surrendered without firing a shot. It was then occupied by the army. The next movement was against Frontera, at the mouth of the Tabasco River, and Tabasco, some seventy miles up that little stream. Frontera was taken by surprise, and Commodore Perry, now second in command to Commodore Conner, moved up the stream with vessels of too heavy draught. He came near losing the "Cumberland" in the mud, and, as it was, she was so disabled that when she was pulled from her perch on a bar she had to be sent home for repairs. Perry, however, defeated the Mexican flotilla and captured all the boats. Two of the prizes had to be blown up, but the "Champion," a fast river boat, which had run between Richmond and Norfolk, was taken out and afterward usefully employed as a despatch-boat. In this expedition there was considerable fighting and also some losses both of officers and men.

In blockading the port of Tuspan, some 120 miles northwest of Vera Cruz, the brig "Truxton," Captain Carpenter, was stationed. The ship was blown ashore and was under the Mexican guns. The Captain sent a boat to tell the Commodore of the disaster, but before relief could reach him he surrendered. In doing this he was opposed bitterly by all his officers, and the quartermaster on duty positively refused to obey the order to haul down the flag. Lieutenant Bushrod Hunter, who first went for assistance, reached

the squadron off Vera Cruz, as did also Lieutenant Otway Berryman, with a boat's crew, which left before the surrender had been effected. The remainder of the crew were taken to Vera Cruz as prisoners of war. As soon as Commodore Conner heard of the disaster he sent Captain Engle with the "Princeton" to Tuspan. He made short work of it. He drove the Mexicans out of the brig, took what armament was left, and then burned her. The guns taken out of the "Truxton" were placed in forts erected to protect Tuspan. But these were captured next year by Commodore Perry and Captain Breese. The officers and men of the navy had a grudge against Tuspan, and the landing detachment which carried the works fought as though each man in it were a demon. It lost three killed, while five officers and six seamen were wounded.

During the summer of 1847, the men of the squadron operating in the Gulf suffered severely from yellow fever and also from scurvy brought on by a lack of fresh food. It was so bad on the "Mississippi" that she had to been sent to Pensacola. Commodore Perry was himself stricken, but he refused to leave, and changed his flag to the "Germantown," which remained. This was after the fall of Vera Cruz, and when the duty of the naval forces was once again only that of blockaders. The investment of Vera Cruz was the most considerable single piece of work performed by the navy during the war. Commodore Conner had gathered at Vera Cruz all his available forces and anxiously awaited the coming of General Scott and his army, who were at Lobos Island, 150 miles north of Vera Cruz. General Taylor, with 5,000 men, had just defeated Santa Anna with 20,000 men at Buena Vista, and two days later, that is, on the 24th of February, 1847, General Scott gave his final orders to his fleet of transports which was to take his army to Vera Cruz. Early in March the transports with 12,600 men arrived in front of Vera Cruz. Captain Parker, in his book previously quoted, says: "No words can express our excitement as ship after ship crowded with enthusiastic soldiers successively came in; some anchoring near us and others continuing on for the anchorage at Anton Lizardo. We had been so long on our ships, and for some months so inactive, that we were longing for something to do. I cannot answer for others, but the scene of that day—and I recollect that it was Sunday—is so vivid, and the events so firmly fixed in my memory, that I can almost see

the ship "Diadem" as she grazed our spanker-boom in her desire to pass near enough to speak us, and I can to this day whistle the waltz played by an infantry band on board a transport anchored near us that night, though I have never heard it since."

Indeed, the naval contingent was most anxious to be in some of the heavy fighting, and the chance seeming near, all was enthusiasm aboard the ships of the squadron. A few days after General Scott's arrival he and Commodore Conner and a large number of principal officers, including Captain Joseph E. Johnston, of the "Engineers," made a reconnaissance to decide on the best place to land the army. They selected the mainland abreast of Sacrificios Island.

On the 9th of March, the steamers "Spitfire" and "Vixen" and several gunboats ran close in-shore and shelled the sand-hills and chaparral in which the enemy might be concealed. Only a few horsemen were made to scamper away. The Government for this very landing had sent out a number of surf-boats, flat on the bottom and sharp at both ends. Each of these carried one hundred men with their arms and accoutrements. They proved most admirable for the service, as the whole army was landed without a mishap, and, singularly enough, the Mexicans did not molest the Americans in the least while this important movement was in progress. By midnight of the 9th of March the whole of the army was ashore. Landing the troops having been accomplished, the work of taking the artillery pieces, the ammunition, and supplies was begun, and this consumed a week, each day lasting from four in the morning till ten at night.

While this was in progress, General Scott was so arranging his troops that he should entirely invest the city, and by the 20th of March the bombardment began. General Scott summoned the authorities to surrender, and gave them a chance to send the women and children out of the city. Both invitation and opportunity were declined. And so it came about that many non-combatants were killed in the siege that followed. The sailors not only had to land the army and the materials of war, but they were obliged to help get the siege guns in place. The blue-jacket ashore is nearly always alive to the importance of having a lark, and even in this arduous service they acted very much as though they were on a spree. On one occasion a "norther" came up, and for several days the seamen could

not get back to their ships. Being idle they had a good time to their hearts' content. It is said that before the end of the first day every Jack of them had a horse and was a mounted marine. One of these, a very tough old salt, had for his charger a donkey, and on this animal he rode by General Scott's quarters in great pride. "Some officers standing by observing that he was, as they thought, seated too far back, called out to him to shift his seat more amidships. 'Gentlemen,' said Jack, drawing rein, 'this is the first craft I ever commanded, and it's d—d hard if I can't ride on the quarter-deck.'"

But there was more serious work immediately in store for the navy than fetching and carrying for the army and rewarding themselves in boyish pranks. The day before the serious bombardment began the squadron was notified by signal from the flagship: "Commodore Perry commands the squadron." There was rejoicing at this, for Perry was regarded as a man who preferred a fight for its own sake rather than to have no fight at all. In this command he proved that he was a good fighter, but he proved also that he knew how to be conservative when necessity made such a course wise. Commodore Conner went home because his health demanded that he should. The Navy Department was not dissatisfied with him. But the opportunity for heavy fighting came after Perry took the command. From the beginning of the siege the fleet kept up a heavy firing on the city and castle so as to divert the fire from the land forces.

General Scott soon saw that his guns were not strong enough to batter down the walls of the city, so he requested Commodore Perry to send him some heavy guns. The Commodore's gallant reply was: "Certainly, General, but I must fight them." And fight them he did, as we shall see. Six heavy pieces of ordnance were landed, and about 200 seamen and volunteers were attached to each gun. Three of these were sixty-eight-pounder shell guns and three thirty-two-pounder solid-shot guns. Each of these guns weighed about three tons. Now each of these had to be dragged through the loose sand, almost knee-deep, for something like three miles before it could be put in the position the engineers had assigned to it. This battery, by the way, was protected by bags of sand piled on each other, and this was the first time that this device had been used. When the battery was in position the officers and men of the ships were so anxious to fight it that, to prevent

jealousy, the officers first to be assigned drew lots for the honor. The first day Captain Aulick commanded, and the next day Captain Mayo. The naval battery fired with such precision that they did amazing damage to the enemy's works, and on the second day the guns in Vera Cruz were silenced. Then began a parley as to terms, but on the 28th there was an unconditional surrender. Now Scott had a foothold in the part of Mexico which counted for something, and he was able to begin that masterly march through the Valley of Mexico and on to the capital of the country. But he never could have obtained this foothold without the assistance of the navy. The country did not recognize this at once, and the newspapers being printed by landsmen, all of the immediate glory was bestowed on General Scott.

Now that Vera Cruz had fallen and General Scott's plans called for a movement toward the interior, it was most desirable for him to have better cavalry. But he lacked horses. Singular as it may seem, he called upon the navy to assist in supplying this deficiency. It was known that there were Mexican horsemen in and about Alvarado, so it was determined to proceed against this place by land and sea, so that the town could be reduced, and the horses secured at the same time. General Quitman, with a brigade, was sent by land, so as to keep the horsemen from running away, while the "Potomac," Captain Aulick, and the "Scourge," Lieutenant Charles G. Hunter, were sent to appear in front of Alvarado. It was evidently intended that Captain Aulick and General Quitman would move on the place on some appointed day. Lieutenant Hunter did not know what the plans were, and as his boat was much faster than the "Potomac" he arrived in front of Alvarado long before Captain Aulick. When the "Potomac" did come in sight, a great commotion was noticed in the harbor. The "Albany," which had been doing blockading service, came out and informed Captain Aulick that Alvarado had been taken.

"By whom?" asked the Captain.

"By Lieutenant Hunter, in the 'Scourge,'" was the reply.

The "Scourge," it should be explained, was a very small steamer, carrying one gun and forty men. Hunter went up pretty close and observing indications of flinching, he fired three guns and dashed boldly in and captured the place. The horsemen, the capture of whom was the main object of the expedition, were frightened off before General Quitman could intercept

them. Having taken possession of Alvarado, Lieutenant Hunter placed in the town a garrison consisting of a midshipman and two men, and hurried his steamer up the river to a place called Tlacotalpan, which he also captured. When General Quitman arrived in Alvarado with his brigade and the place was gravely handed over to him by Passed Midshipman William G. Temple (afterward a very distinguished officer of high rank) he was greatly amused and laughed heartily. But Commodore Perry was annoyed and angry. As soon as he could get hold of Hunter—not an easy matter, as Hunter had gone on his conquering way still further up the river with the intention of taking all the rest of Mexico not subjugated by Taylor and Scott—he placed him under arrest and preferred charges against him. When Hunter was shortly tried by court-martial, he was sentenced to be reprimanded by the Commodore, the reprimand to be read from the quarter-deck of every vessel in the squadron.

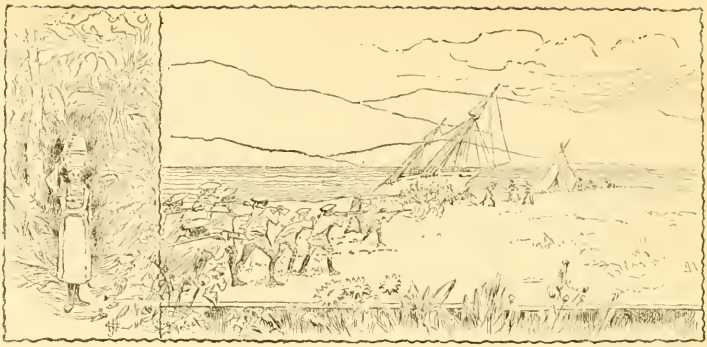
The reprimand, prepared by Commodore Perry, was thought by pretty nearly all the officers of the squadron to be entirely too severe. A military offence had been committed, but it amounted to a mere trifle, and the time was ripe for the people to laugh over such an occurrence. In effect the reprimand was something like this: "Who told you to take Alvarado? You were sent to watch Alvarado, not to take it. You have taken Alvarado with but a single gun and not a marine to back you!" Then the announcement was made that the squadron would soon move against Tabasco, and that Hunter should not accompany it, but that he should be dismissed the squadron. And he was sent home. In New York the people made a hero of him, giving him swords and dinners, and securing for him the command of the schooner "Taney," in which he made a roving cruise to the Mediterranean. As long as he lived he was always spoken of as "Alvarado" Hunter. A sense of humor is sometimes a dangerous cargo for a public man to carry; but the absence of it also is often dangerous. In this instance Commodore Perry, because he did not see the amusing aspect of Hunter's escapade, made himself so ridiculous that he came near cutting short his own career, which, as will afterward be seen in this history, was destined for greater achievements than any in the past.

The next objective point for the navy was Tuspan, where the "Truxton" had been lost. The bar at Tuspan [illegible] dangerous, and even the small steamers

of the squadron had their masts hoisted out of them to lighten them. Commodore Perry hoisted his flag on the "Spitfire" and led the way up the river with the boats of the squadron in tow. The first fort on the river below the town, called the Pana, was silenced by the gun of the "Spitfire" and then stormed by the sailors; two other forts were taken in the same way and the town was occupied. The Mexicans made a spirited defence, but did little damage, only one man being killed. Among the wounded were Captain Tatnall, Commander Whittle, and Lieutenant James Parker. The guns taken from the "Truxton" were found in one of the forts and restored to the fleet.

The last naval operation of the war was against Tabasco. Commodore Perry took all of the fleet which could possibly go up the river from Frontera. This town was easily captured, but when the ascent of the river began the boats were continually fired upon from the trees and chaparral along the banks. At a place called Devil's Bend, the passage of the river was interrupted by a sunken obstruction, technically called a *chevaux de frise*. Commodore Perry did not mean to let this stop him, so he organized a land force of seamen and marines and concluded to march to Tabasco. He had numerous skirmishes, but was not stopped. One day his own ships passed him, the *chevaux de frise* having been raised by attaching rubber bags to it and then inflating them with air. When Perry arrived at Tabasco he found the American flag flying, the town having fallen without resistance to his own ships. So his own arduous march across country had been all for nothing. This was the last work of the sailors, but the marines of the navy still saw glorious service, as a detachment of them was with General Scott, participating in the attack on Chapultepec. They were also among the first to enter the City of Mexico when that capital surrendered.

The navy in the War with Mexico did itself credit as it always had before, and reflected honor upon the country, whose flag was upheld with brilliant courage and untiring zeal.



## CHAPTER XIX.

THE NAVY IN PEACE.—SURVEYING THE DEAD SEA.—SUPPRESSING THE SLAVE TRADE.—THE FRANKLIN RELIEF EXPEDITION.—COMMODORE PERRY IN JAPAN.—SIGNING OF THE TREATY.—TROUBLE IN CHINESE WATERS.—THE KOSZTA CASE.—THE SECOND FRANKLIN RELIEF EXPEDITION.—FOOTE AT CANTON.—"BLOOD IS THICKER THAN WATER."

AFTER the Mexican War the navy engaged for twelve years in works of peace varied by a little exciting police duty on the high seas. Much was done for commerce and for civilization in the years immediately succeeding 1848, but the story, though important, is not exciting, and is therefore little known. The records of these years afford a fair suggestion of what a navy may do when actual fighting is not necessary, and when its vessels, with the trained sailors and scientists who man them, may be utilized in utilitarian work.

Shortly after the close of the Mexican War, the armed ship "Supply," under command of Lieutenant Lynch, sailed on an expedition to the Dead Sea. The start was made from New York, and the vessel arrived in the Mediterranean only a few weeks after peace had been declared with Mexico. At Smyrna, Lieutenant Lynch left the "Supply," and went to Constantinople to obtain permission to enter the Turkish domains. This having been granted, the party sailed for Haifa. Arriving at this port on the 21st of March, they left their ship, and set out for the Sea of Galilee by an overland route, carrying on trucks the boats which had been specially built for naviga-

tion in the river Jordan. Upon reaching Tiberias, on the western shore of the Sea of Galilee, the party divided, one detachment embarking in the boats to navigate the Sea of Galilee, and the other mounting camels and horses to make the trip by land, with the intention of keeping those who had sailed in view as much as possible, and protecting them from attacks by wandering Arabs or aiding them if necessary in the passage of the tortuous and turbulent Jordan. Eight days were consumed in making this passage, and a distance covered of 200 miles, although if the trip had been made in a straight line instead of along the winding course of the river, it would have been necessary to have traversed only sixty miles. An encampment was established on the desolate banks of the Dead Sea, and several exploring and scientific expeditions in the neighborhood were made. Among the interesting facts gathered was the exact depression of the Dead Sea below the level of the ocean. This was found to be 1,312 feet.

The western coast of Africa was the scene of the next important activity on the part of the American cruisers. The slave-trade, which in the eighteenth century had assumed extensive proportions, still flourished to a degree which made the condition upon the coast a disgrace to civilization. It was a notorious fact, moreover, that a large proportion of the vessels in the trade were of American build and sailed under the Stars and Stripes. The United States Government was anxious to wipe out this blot upon the nation's fair fame; and consequently, in 1849, sent Lieutenant Foote, in command of the brig "Perry," to African waters. The lieutenant, who, by the way, afterward became the distinguished Admiral Foote, at once began active cruising off Ambrig, a notorious slave mart. The "Perry" was constantly at sea, chasing and boarding suspicious vessels, and very often her boats passed through the surf and ran up the jungle-bordered rivers to the slave barracoons. Many large slavers were captured, and when, in 1851, the "Perry" was succeeded on the African coast by the squadron under Commander Gregory, Lieutenant Foote had effectually checked the slave trade. He was thanked for his services by the Secretary of the Navy.

While Lieutenant Foote was sailing under the blazing sun of Africa, another lieutenant, Edwin J. De Haven, in command of the brigs "Rescue" and "Advance," was pushing his way northward through the ice of the Arctic

Ocean. The Navy Department had considered it proper and fitting to aid England in her search for the British commander, Sir John Franklin and his men, who had sailed into the Arctic regions on an exploring expedition, and had been gone so long as to warrant the belief that they were in grave peril, if not already dead. Volunteers for the relief expedition had been called for by the department. Lieutenant De Haven and others had responded, and on May 24th, 1850, started on their errand of mercy. In July, the party was in Baffin's Bay, and here the brigs remained embedded in the ice for twenty-one days. On the 29th of July, by a sudden movement of the floe, an opening at the north presented itself; a northeast breeze sprang up at the same time, and with press of sail the brigs were able to force their way into clear water.

For a month afterward there was continual battling with the ice, and slow progress northward. On August 27th, Lieutenant De Haven, having in the mean time fallen in with several English relief expeditions, decided to make a search on the shores adjacent to a Lancaster Sound. Here were found three graves, and various signs that Franklin and his companions had spent a winter somewhere thereabouts; but there were no indications of the course his vessels, the "Erebus" and the "Terror," had taken when they had sailed away. Throughout the winter the search was continued, and the "Rescue" and the "Advance" were often in imminent danger of destruction in the masses of ice which pressed against the sides of the ships with enormous force. "Every moment," said Lieutenant De Haven, in his report, "I expected the vessels would be crushed or overwhelmed by the masses of ice forced up far above our bulwarks." But at last, on June 6th, they forced their way again into the open sea; and as the instructions had been not to spend a second winter in the Arctic regions, sail was set for home, and late in the summer of 1851 the brigs arrived at New York.

The sending of the frigate "Mississippi," commanded by Captain Matthew G. Perry, to the coast of Halifax, in 1852, averted what threatened to be serious trouble. A dispute had arisen among the American and Canadian fishing schooners in those waters, and seven American vessels had been seized by the British cruisers.

This caused intense indignation in New England; but Captain Perry poured oil upon the troubled waters, and in 1854, as a result of his visit,

a reciprocity treaty between the United States and Canada was signed, and this lasted for ten years.

Captain Perry performed his most important services for the government, however, in Japan. The early fifties were an era of exploring expeditions for the navy. There were trips up the rivers into unknown regions of South America and Africa. The Isthmus of Darien was explored, and an ambitious scheme to cut a ship-channel through was found to be impracticable. It was very natural, during this activity in penetrating little-known parts of the world, that attention should have been given to Japan, which was a land of mystery to the world at large because of the exclusion of foreigners from that country. In 1852, Captain Perry was assigned the command of the squadron cruising in the East Indies, and was empowered, in addition to his ordinary duties, to make a display of force in the waters of Japan in order to obtain better treatment for American seamen cast upon Japanese shores, and to gain entry into Japanese ports for vessels seeking supplies. He bore a letter, moreover, from the President of the United States to the Emperor of Japan, written with a view to obtaining a treaty providing for friendly intercourse and commerce with the haughty island kingdom. On the 8th of July, the squadron, comprising the frigates "Mississippi," "Susquehanna," and "Powhatan"; the corvette "Macedonian"; the sloops-of-war "Plymouth," "Saratoga," and "Vandalia"; and the store-ships "Supply," "Southampton," and "Lexington," anchored off the city of Uraga, in the Bay of Jeddo, Japan. Captain Perry decided that the proper course to pursue with the Japanese was to assume a very lofty and commanding tone and bearing. He therefore ordered away from the sides of his vessel the boats which swarmed around it, and allowed none but government officials of high rank to come on board. He himself remained in seclusion in his cabin, treating with the Japanese through intermediaries. He moved his squadron nearer the capital than was allowable, and then demanded that a special commission, composed of men of the highest rank, be appointed to convey his letter from the President to the Emperor. The close proximity of the ships-of-war to the capital, and Captain Perry's peremptory demand, were not at all to the liking of the Japanese; but they were greatly impressed with his apparent dignity and power, and at last consented to receive and consider the letter. Fearing treachery, Captain Perry moved his ships up so that their guns would com-

mand the building prepared for his reception, and on the 14th of July went ashore with an escort of 400 officers and men, who found themselves, on landing, surrounded by about 6,000 Japanese soldiers under arms.

Three months were given to the Japanese officials to reply to the letter, and Captain Perry sailed with his squadron for the coast of China. He returned after an interval of three months, and anchored his ships beyond Uraga, where the previous conference had been held, and nearer the capital, despite the fact that a place twenty miles below had been appointed for the second meeting. The Japanese demurred at this, being so exclusive that they did not wish their capital nor their country even to be seen by foreigners. Instead of respecting these wishes, Captain Perry approached still nearer, until he was only eight miles from Tokio. This high-handed policy had the desired effect. Five special Japanese commissioners met Captain Perry, and in a building within range of the ships' guns, negotiations were carried on. They resulted, on March 31st, in the signing of a treaty by the Japanese, in which they promised to open two of their ports to American vessels seeking supplies; to give aid to seamen of the United States wrecked upon their shores; to allow American citizens temporarily residing in their ports to enter, within certain prescribed limits, the surrounding country; to permit consuls of the United States to reside in one of the open ports; and, in general, to show a peaceful and friendly spirit toward our government and citizens. This treaty is important, because it opened the door for the peoples of the world to a country which has since proved to be possessed of vast wealth and resources. Captain Perry received high praise for his firmness and diplomacy in the conduct of the difficult negotiations.

One vessel of Captain Perry's fleet, the "Plymouth," had remained at Shanghai when the squadron returned to Japanese waters, and she played a very active though brief part in the troubles which then existed in China. Imperial and revolutionary troops were fighting for supremacy, and the former showed a hostile disposition to the American and English residents of Shanghai. An American pilot was captured by an Imperial man-of-war, but was retaken in a most spirited manner from the Chinese by Lieutenant Guest, and a boat's crew from the "Plymouth." The Chinese manifestations of hostility toward foreign residents continued, and on the 4th of April,

1854, about ninety men from the "Plymouth" and American merchant-ships, under the leadership of Commander Kelly, went ashore, and in conjunction with one hundred and fifty men from a British man-of-war, began an attack upon the Imperial camp. The Americans had two field-pieces and a twelve-pound boat-howitzer, which, together with the muskets, were used so effectively that, after ten minutes of sharp fighting, the Chinese fled in great disorder, leaving a number of dead and wounded upon the field. The American loss was two killed and four wounded.

Piracy was rampant in the China seas during this period, and so bold and ferocious were the Chinese desperadoes that their junks were a great terror to merchant vessels, and seriously interfered with commerce. The "Powhatan," another of Captain Perry's squadron, and the English sloop "Rattler," joined forces against a fleet of piratical junks off Khulan, in 1855, and completely destroyed them, killing many of the pirates in the attack and taking a large number of prisoners. In Happy Valley, Hong-Kong, a monument was erected to commemorate the eight English and American sailors who were killed in the conflict.

While the East India squadron was performing these important and gallant services off the coasts of Japan and China, the other vessels of the navy were by no means idle. Among the conspicuous naval events of the time was the spirited action of Commander Ingraham at Smyrna, in 1854. A young Austrian, Martin Koszta, had lived in New York city two years before, and had declared his intention of becoming an American citizen. He had gone to Smyrna on business, and having incurred the displeasure of the Austrian government, had been seized, and was a prisoner on board the Austrian man-of-war "Hussar." Commander Ingraham, commanding the sloop-of-war "St. Louis," demanded that Koszta be surrendered, on the ground that he was an American citizen. This being refused, Ingraham cleared for action, although the "Hussar's" force was much superior to his own. His bold stand brought the Austrians to satisfactory terms, and the threatened engagement was averted by the surrender of Koszta.

There were two Arctic expeditions in addition to that of the "Rescue" and the "Advance" in the early fifties. Both of them grew out of the ill-fated Arctic explorations of Sir John Franklin. Lady Franklin, his wife, was anxious, upon the failure of the first relief expeditions, to send another, and

she asked that a surgeon of the United States Navy, Dr. Kane, be permitted to command it. The Navy Department granted the request, and in June, 1853, the expedition, composed of eighteen men under orders from the department and the patronage of Henry Grinnell, of New York, and George Peabody, the American merchant, of London, began the northwest journey. This search for Sir John Franklin's ships was also unsuccessful, and the relief party was for a long time in imminent danger of a fate similar to Franklin's. After living for two winters imprisoned in the ice in Smith's Sound, they abandoned their vessel, which had been largely broken up to provide fuel, and started on a journey over the ice in sledges. After eighty-four days of extreme privation and thrilling adventure, they reached Driscol Bay, where they were found by Commander Hartstone and Lieutenant Simms, commanding respectively the "Release" and the "Arctic," which vessels had been fitted out by order of Congress to rescue them. In October, 1855, the united party reached New York.

In November, 1855, the presence of the United States ship "Germantown," commanded by Captain Lynch, in the harbor of Montevideo, prevented an extensive massacre. There had been a rebellion in Paraguay, and the insurrectionists had capitulated. The government troops rushed upon them with the intention of despatching them, when a detachment of United States marines interfered and put an end to the sanguinary scene. Three years afterward the marines performed efficient services in Montevideo in protecting foreign residents against the insurgents in another rebellion.

The rather curious episode of a battle-ship fighting Indians occurred in 1856. The sloop-of-war "Decatur," Commander Gansevoort, anchored off Seattle, Washington, to protect the settlers from attacks from a large body of Indians. The savages appeared, and fought the marines, who had landed, with much spirit for six hours. At nightfall they disappeared in the woods, having suffered the loss of a large number of braves.

One of the most gallant and important of the minor operations of the navy took place in November of the same year. Trouble having arisen between the Chinese authorities of the City of Canton and the English officials in the vicinity, it was thought that American interests might be injured, and in consequence Commander Foote stationed his vessel, the sloop-of-war "Portsmouth," of the squadron under Flag-Officer Armstrong, near

the island of Whampoa, and thence proceeded, in several armed boats, to ascend the river to Canton to establish an armed neutrality. Several Americans, however, joined the British in an attack upon the governor's palace, and planted the flag beside the English colors on the wall of the city. Commander Foote disavowed this act, but as he was returning from an interview with the flag-officer at Whampoa, several shots of grape and canister were fired from the forts upon his boat, although it displayed the American flag. The next day the "Portsmouth" and the "Levant," which had come up the river to lend her aid, proceeded to the Canton barrier forts to avenge the insult. The "Levant" grounded before coming in range of the forts; but the "Portsmouth," under a sharp fire, sailed on until within about 500 yards of the nearest fort; then she opened fire. After she had thrown about 200 shells, the Chinese ceased firing. Then followed four days of unsatisfactory parley with Yeh, the Governor of Canton, after which Commander Foote renewed the attack. The "Levant" now joined the "Portsmouth," and the vessels began a cannonade, which was returned with spirit for an hour. Then 208 men, in ten boats, were landed, and stormed the nearest fort, which was taken. Five thousand pigtail-wearing soldiers afterward attempted to recapture it, but were repulsed. In like manner, on the following morning, the next fort was taken, with an American loss of but three men. During the afternoon the defenders of the third fort fled. The next morning, in the face of a heavy fire, the fourth and last fort was carried by a rapid assault. The little company of Americans was now in possession of four modern forts constructed by European engineers, which had been defended, moreover, by thousands of men. The insult had been avenged, and the affair resulted in a treaty of friendship and commerce with China.

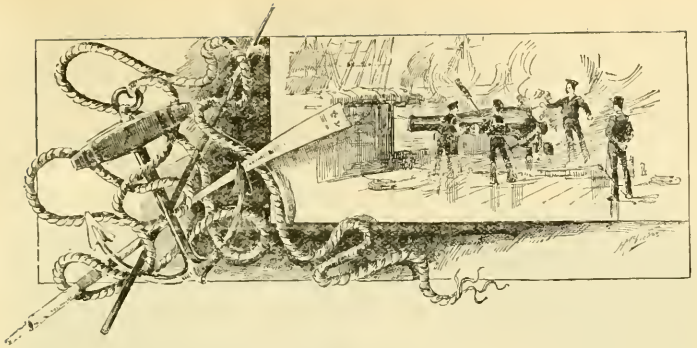
There was little love between Americans and Chinese, however, and three years afterward Captain Josiah Tatnall rendered valuable aid to the English and French gunboats when fired upon by the Chinese forts. The boats, under the command of Sir James Hope, were attempting to remove obstructions in the Peiho River when the forts suddenly opened a destructive fire. A desperate conflict followed, in which several hundred of the English were killed. Captain Tatnall commanded the chartered steamer "Toey-Wan," which was in the harbor. He forgot his neutrality as he watched the scene. With the exclamation, "Blood is thicker than water!" he jumped

into his launch and steamed for the British flagship. The boat was struck with a ball, and before its trip was ended sunk, the coxswain being killed and Lieutenant Trenchart severely wounded. The others who had manned her were rescued, and they helped the English at the guns. Captain Tatnall afterward used the "Toey-Wan" to tow up and bring into action the British reserves. His action was a clear violation of the treaty and the neutrality law. He received but slight punishment, however, and gained great popularity in Great Britain.

At Eaya, in the Feejee Islands, in 1858, a sharp conflict took place between the natives and forty men under Lieutenant Caldwell, who had been sent to destroy the principal village as retribution for the murder of two American citizens. The natives were sent fleeing inland. The Secretary of the Navy said of the affair, "The gallantry, coolness, and bravery displayed by officers and men was in the highest degree commendable." A somewhat similar episode occurred in the vicinity of Kisembo, on the west coast of Africa, in 1860. The natives threatened the property and lives of American citizens, and would undoubtedly have put their threats into effect had it not been for the presence and prompt action of Commander Brent of the sloop-of-war "Marion." When an insurrection occurred in the neighborhood of Panama, in July, 1860, Commander Porter landed a body of marines and sailors from his ship, the "St. Mary's," which was then stationed on the western coast of Mexico. The governor gave up the city of Panama to the joint occupancy of the forces of the "St. Mary's" and the British ship-of-war "Clio," and tranquillity was quickly restored.

# PART III

## BLUE JACKETS OF '61



# BLUE-JACKETS OF '61.

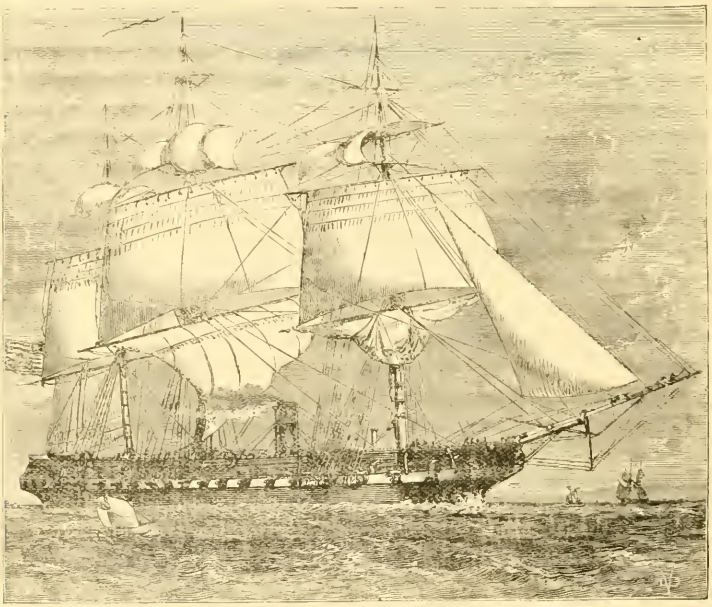
## CHAPTER I.

THE OPENING OF THE CONFLICT. — THE NAVIES OF THE CONTESTANTS. — DIX'S FAMOUS DESPATCH. — THE RIVER GUNBOATS.

THE story of the naval operations of the civil war is a record of wonderful energy and inventive skill in improvising and building war-vessels, vigilance and courage in handling them, and desperate bravery and dash displayed by officers and seamen in the great engagements in which vessels of either side took part. Yet of the immense body of literature dealing with the war, the greater part is given to telling the story of the great armies of the North and South. The details of the great land battles are familiar to many who have but a vague idea of the service done by the "blue jackets" of the North, and the daring deeds performed by the navies of both sides.

When the first mutterings of the storm of war began to be heard, the United States Government had at its disposal sixty-nine vessels-of-war, of which twenty-seven were laid up for repairs, or, sailors would say, "out of commission." Of the forty-two vessels in commission, twenty-six were

absent on missions to the East Indies, the African coast, and other distant quarters of the globe. Long months must elapse before the most hasty orders could reach them. Many were sailing-vessels, and must consume many months of precious time before they could reach the shores of the



THE "HARTFORD," FARRAGUT'S FLAGSHIP.

United States. Indeed, though on the inauguration of President Lincoln on March 4, 1861, all these vessels were immediately recalled, not one arrived before the middle of June, and many were delayed until late in the following winter. Of the vessels at home, many were old-fashioned sailing-frigates; beautiful with their towering masts and clouds of snowy canvas, but almost useless in that day when steam had become known as the only means of propelling vessels-of-war.

In officers and men the navy was almost as deficient as in vessels. A

long peace had filled the lists of officers with old men past that age in which may be expected the alertness and energy that must be possessed by Jack afloat. The lower grades were filled by boyish officers from the Naval Academy, who had never seen a gun fired in anger. The service was becoming rusty from long idleness.

Such was the condition of the navy of the United States when Abraham Lincoln was made President. Four years later the navy of the United States consisted of six hundred and seventy-one vessels. No nation of the world had such a naval power. The stern lessons of the great war had taught shipbuilders that wooden ships were a thing of the past. The little "Monitor" had by one afternoon's battle proved to all the sovereigns of Europe that their massive ships were useless. And all this had been done by a people grappling in deadly strife with an enemy in their very dwellings. The world's history contains no more wonderful story of energy and invention.

When President Lincoln began his term of office, he appointed Gideon Welles of Connecticut Secretary of the Navy. South Carolina had seceded from the Union. Mississippi, Georgia, Florida, Alabama, and Louisiana had followed South Carolina. Anderson, with a handful of United States troops, was holding Fort Sumter, expecting every minute to see the puff of smoke from the distant casement of Fort Moultrie, and hear the shriek of the shell that should announce the opening of the attack. At Washington, politicians were intriguing. The loyalty of no man could be regarded as certain. Officers of the army and navy were daily resigning, and hastening to put themselves under the command of their various States. In the South all was activity. In the North the popular desire for a compromise hampered the authorities so that no decided stand against the spread of the rebellion could be made. The new Secretary of the Navy found himself face to face with the certainty of a long and bloody war, yet had under his command a navy hardly adequate for times of peace. To add to his perplexity, many of the oldest and most skilful officers in the navy resigned, saying that their duty to their States was greater than to the United States as a whole. A few revenue officers even went so far as to deliver to the State authorities the vessels of which they were in command. One commander, a Georgian, bringing his ship back from foreign waters, hesitated long whether to take it to the navy-yard at

DEPARTURE OF A NAVAL EXPEDITION FROM PORT ROYAL.

New York, or to deliver it to the Southern leaders. He finally decided to obey orders, and the ship remained with the United States. Some days afterward the commander told his lieutenant of his hesitation. "We all saw it," said the young officer; "and had you turned the ship's prow towards Charleston, you would have been instantly put in irons."

The surrender of another naval vessel called forth that famous despatch from John A. Dix that will ever be linked with his name. The United States revenue cutter "McClelland" was lying at New Orleans, under the command of Capt. Breshwood. The revenue service is distinct from the regular navy, and is under the general command of the Secretary of the Treasury. John A. Dix, then Secretary of the Treasury, suspected that Capt. Breshwood was about to surrender his vessel to the Confederates, and sent an agent to order him to take the vessel to New York. Breshwood refused, and instantly Dix sent the despatch: "Tell Lieut. Caldwell to arrest Capt. Breshwood, assume command of the cutter, and obey the order through you. If Capt. Breshwood, after arrest, undertakes to interfere with the command of the cutter, tell Lieut. Caldwell to consider him as a mutineer, and treat him accordingly. *If any man attempts to haul down the American flag, shoot him on the spot.*" This despatch was intercepted by the Confederates, and the cutter was surrendered. But Dix's determined words reverberated through the North, and thrilled all hearts with the hope that the time for delay was past, and that the growing rebellion would be put down with a firm hand.

So at the opening of the war we find the North with a navy consisting of but a few old-fashioned ships, few sailors, officers everywhere resigning, and a general feeling of distrust of brother officers in all grades.

The condition of the South as regards the navy was even worse. The Southern States had never done any great amount of ship-building. The people were almost all engaged in farming. The crops of cotton and sugar that they raised were shipped in vessels built in Maine, and manned by sailors from the sea-faring villages of New England. At the time the war broke out, there was hardly a ship-yard in the confines of the Confederacy A few vessels were gained by the treachery of United States officers. The capture of the Norfolk navy-yard brought them large quantities of naval stores, and by wonderful activity a few vessels were built for service on inland sounds and rivers. But at no time could the Confederacy have

been said to have a navy; and, keeping this fact in view, the record the Confederates made with two or three vessels is most wonderful. In war-vessels for service on that wonderful net-work of rivers that make up the water-ways of the Mississippi Valley, the South was not so deficient as in ships of the sea-going class. The long, crescent-shaped levee at New Orleans is lined throughout certain seasons of the year by towering river-steamers which ply up and down the Mississippi and connecting streams, taking from the plantations huge loads of cotton, sugar, and rice, and carrying to the planters those supplies which can only be furnished by the markets of a great city. The appearance of one of these towering river transports as she comes sailing down the turbid stream of the great Father of Waters, laden to the water's edge with brown bales of cotton, and emitting from her lofty, red crowned smoke-stacks dense clouds of pitchy black smoke, is most wonderful. Unlike ocean-steamers, the river-steamer carries her load upon her deck. Built to penetrate far towards the head-waters of rivers and bayous that in summer become mere shallow ditches, these steamers have a very light draught. Many of them, whose tiers of white cabins tower sixty or seventy feet into the air, have but three feet of hull beneath the river's surface. The first deck, when the vessel is but lightly loaded, stands perhaps two feet out of water. Above this, carried on rows of posts twenty feet high, comes the first cabin. All between is open to the air on either side; so that, as one of the huge river-monsters passes at night, the watcher on the bank can see the stalwart, black, half-naked bodies of the negro stokers, bending before the glowing furnace doors, and throwing in the soft coal, that issues in clouds of smoke from the towering chimneys seventy feet above. The lights in three rows of cabin windows glow; and the unceasing beat of the paddle-wheels mingles with the monotonous puff of the steam from the escape-pipes, and the occasional bursts of music from the open cabin doors. One who for the first time looks on one of these leviathans of the Mississippi, pursuing its stately course at night, does not wonder at the frightened negro, who, seeing for the first time a night-steamboat, rushed madly from the river's bank, crying that the angel Gabriel had come to blow the last trump.

When these boats have taken on their full load of cotton, they present a very different appearance. Then all the open space beneath the cabins

is filled by a mass of cotton-bales. The hull is so sunken in the water that the lowest tier of cotton-bales is lapped by the little waves that ruffle the surface of the river. The stokers and furnaces are hid from view, and the cabins appear to be floating on one huge cotton bale. Generally a great wooden stern-wheel propels this strange craft, adding to the grotesqueness of the sight.

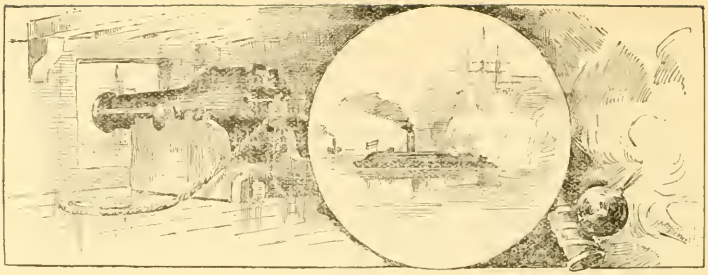
It may readily be understood, that vessels of this class, in which strength was subordinated to lightness, and economy to gingerbread decoration, seemed to be but poor materials for vessels-of-war. The tremendous recoil of a rifled cannon fired from one of those airy decks, meant to stand no ruder shock than the vibration caused by dancing pleasure-parties, would shake the whole frail structure to pieces. Yet the ingenuity born of necessity, and the energy awakened by the immediate prospect of war, led the Confederate engineers to convert some of these pleasure-palaces into the most terrible engines of destruction chronicled in the annals of war. The first step was to sweep off all the towering superstructure of decks, cabins, and saloons; tear away all the fanciful mouldings, the decorated staterooms, and carved and gilded stairways. This left a long, shallow hull, with a powerful engine in the centre, and great paddle-wheels towering on either side; the whole so light that the soldiers of Grant's army, when they first saw one, stoutly averred that "those boats could run on a heavy dew." The hull was then thinly plated with iron, and the prow lengthened, and made massive, until it formed the terrible "ram," fallen into disuse since the days of the Greek galleys, to be taken up again by naval architects in the nineteenth century. Then on the deck was built a pent-house of oak and iron, with sloping sides just high enough to cover the engine. The two towering smoke-stacks, the pride of the old river-steamers, were cut down to squat pipes protruding a foot or two above the strange structure. In the sides were embrasures, from which, when open, peered the iron muzzles of the dogs of war, ready to show their teeth and spit fire and iron at the enemy. This was the most powerful type of the river gunboat, and with them the Confederacy was fairly well provided; though it was not long before the war department of the United States was well supplied with similar ships. It was these iron-clad gunboats that used to rouse the anger of the doughty Admiral Farragut, who persisted in declaring them cowardly engines of destruction, and predicted that as they

came into use, the race of brave fighting jack-tars would disappear On one occasion the admiral was ploughing his way up the Mississippi above New Orleans, in one of Commodore Bailey's river iron-clads. The batteries of the enemy on either hand were pounding away at the ascending ships, hurling huge bolts of iron against their mailed sides, with a thunder that was deafening, and a shock that made the stricken ships reel. The admiral stood in the gun-room of one of the iron-clads, watching the men working the guns, in an atmosphere reeking with the smoke of the powder. A look of manifest disapproval was on his face. Suddenly an unusually well-directed shot struck a weak point in the armor, and, bursting through, killed two men near the admiral's position. He looked for a moment on the ghastly spectacle, then turning to an officer said, "You may stay here in your iron-clad room if you wish: as for me, I feel safer on deck." And on deck he went, and stayed there while the fleet passed through the hail of shot and shell.

The scarcity of iron in the Southern States prevented the naval authorities of the newly organized Confederacy from equipping a very large fleet of iron-clads. At the outbreak of the war, the Tredegar Iron Works at Richmond was the only place in the South where iron plates of a size suitable for plating vessels could be rolled. The demand was of course far in excess of the facilities of the factory, and many were the make-shifts that ship-builders were forced to. Some vessels were plated only about the centre, so as to protect the boiler and engines. Others bore such a thin coat of iron that they were derisively called "tin-clads" by the sailors, who insisted that a Yankee can-opener was all that was necessary to rip the vessel up. Sometimes, when even a little iron was unattainable, bales of cotton were piled up around the sides, like breastworks, for the protection of men and engines. The vessel which captured the United States ship "Harriet Lane," at Galveston, was thus provided; and the defence proved very valuable. One great objection to the cotton-bale bulwarks was the very inflammable nature of the material, since a red-hot shot from the enemy, or a bit of blazing wadding from a gun, would set it smouldering with a dense black smoke that drove the men from their guns until the bales could be thrown overboard; thus extinguishing the fire, but exposing the men to the fire of the enemy.

One of the most striking features of the war of secession was the

manner in which private citizens hastened to contribute towards the public defence. This was so no less in naval than in military circles. Perhaps the greatest gift ever made by a citizen to his Government was the gift by "Commodore" Vanderbilt to the United States of a magnificently equipped ship-of-war, which was named "The Vanderbilt" in honor of her donor, and did efficient service in maintaining the blockade on the Atlantic coast. Mr. James Gordon Bennett, the present owner of the "New-York Herald," put his yacht at the service of the Government, and was himself commissioned a lieutenant in the revenue service.

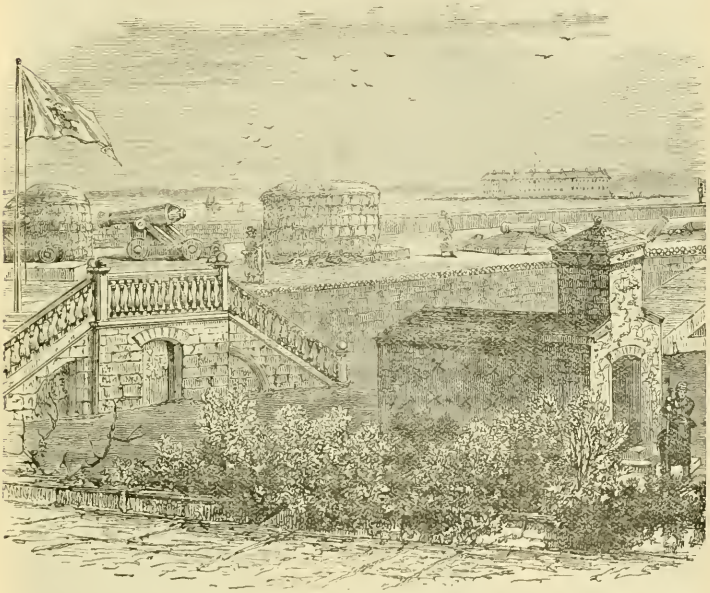


## CHAPTER II.

FORT SUMTER BOMBARDED.—ATTEMPT OF THE "STAR OF THE WEST" TO RE-ENFORCE ANDERSON.—THE NAVAL EXPEDITION TO FORT SUMTER.—THE RESCUE OF THE FRIGATE "CONSTITUTION."—BURNING THE NORFOLK NAVY-YARD.

THE first purely warlike event of the civil war was the bombardment and capture of Fort Sumter in Charleston Harbor, by the troops of the State of South Carolina. At the time when it first became evident that civil war was inevitable, Fort Sumter was vacant. The only United States troops stationed at Charleston were two companies of artillery under Major Robert Anderson. The fortifications of Charleston Harbor consisted of Fort Moultrie on the main land (in which Anderson's command was stationed), Fort Pinckney, and Fort Sumter standing massive and alone in the centre of the harbor. Anderson, with his handful of troops in the most vulnerable of the three forts, saw day by day the secession sentiment growing stronger. Almost daily some of the privileges of the soldiery were cut off; such as the right of passing through the city, and the right to buy supplies in the public markets. Daily could be heard the drum and the tread of the newly organized bodies of State soldiers. Anderson saw that his position was a weak one, but could get no orders from headquarters. Finally he decided to assume the responsibility of evacuating Fort Moultrie and occupying Fort Sumter. To-day it hardly seems as though he could have thought of doing otherwise, but

at that time it was a grave responsibility for a man to assume. The whole voice of the North was for compromise, and it was his part to commit the first overt act of war. But he was nobly upheld in his decision by his Northern brethren. Having decided, he lost no time in carrying his plan



FORT MOULTRIE.

into effect. His little corps of troops was drawn up at midnight on the parade, and for the first time informed of the contemplated movement. The guns of Fort Moultrie were hurriedly knocked from their trunnions, and spiked; the gun-carriages were piled in great heaps, and fired; and every thing that might in any way be used against the United States Government was destroyed. Then the work of evacuation was begun. A small fleet of row-boats carried the troops to the entrance of the great, sullen fort, standing alone in the middle of the harbor, and made frequent trips bringing supplies and ammunition from the deserted fortress. All

ANDERSON'S COMMAND OCCUPYING FORT SUMTER.

was done silently: the oars were muffled, and the commands of the officers were whispered, that no tidings should be told of the movement under way. Before sunrise all was completed; and when the rays of the rising sun fell upon the stars and stripes floating from the flagstaff of Sumter, the people of Charleston turned their eyes from the starry flag to the clouds of smoke arising from Fortress Moultrie, and comprehended that the war had begun. Newspaper correspondents and agents of the Federal Government, and the Southern leaders, rushed for the telegraph-wires; and the news soon sped over the country, that Sumter was occupied. The South Carolinians at once began to build earthworks on all points bearing on the fort, and were evidently preparing to drive Anderson and his troops out. Anderson promptly telegraphed to Washington for supplies and re-enforcements, and expressed his intention of staying as long as the walls stood. The Government was dilatory, but finally concluded to re-enforce the fort, and to that end secured the steamer "Star of the West," and began the work of provisioning her for the voyage. It was decided that she should carry no guns: that would look too much like war; and accordingly, on the 8th of January, this helpless vessel set out to the aid of the beleaguered garrison of Fort Sumter. The news was at once telegraphed to Charleston; and the gunners in the Confederate trenches shotted their guns, and awaited the appearance of the steamer. She hove into sight on the morning of the 12th, and when within range was notified, by a shot across her bows, that she was expected to stop. This signal being disregarded, the firing began in earnest; and the shot and shell fell thick about the ship, which kept pluckily on her course. But it was useless to persist. One shot struck the steamer near the bows, others whizzed through her rigging, and finally her captain saw a tug putting out from the land, towing a schooner crowded with armed men to cut off the "Star's" retreat. He gave the command "Hard a port." The ship's head swung round, and she steamed away, leaving the garrison to their fate. An old gunner who stood in a casemate of Fort Sumter, with the lanyard of a shotted gun in his hand, tells the story of how he begged Major Anderson to let him fire on the rebel batteries. "Not yet; be patient," was the response. When the shells began to fall thick about the steamer, he again asked permission to retaliate, but met the same response. Then when he saw the white splinters fly from the bow, where the enemies' shell had struck, he cried, "Now, surely, we can return

*that!*" but still the answer was, "Be patient." When the "Star of the West," confessing defeat, turned and fled from the harbor, Anderson turned and walked away, curtly saying there was no need to fire then, but to save the load for the necessity that was coming.

MAJOR ROBERT ANDERSON.

The first naval operation of the war was the expedition fitted out to relieve Fort Sumter. In itself, this expedition was but an insignificant affair, ending in failure; but as the first warlike action on the part of the United States Government, it attracted the greatest attention throughout the nation. In preparing the vessels for sea, great care was taken to keep their destination secret, so that no warning should reach the Confederates, who were lying in their batteries about Sumter, awaiting the first offensive action of the United States authorities to begin shelling the fortress. While the squadron was fitting out, it was generally supposed that it was intended to carry troops and munitions of war to Fort Pickens in Pensacola Harbor, which was invested by the Confederates. When the fleet finally sailed, each commander carried sealed orders, upon opening which he first found that the expedition was bound for Charleston Harbor. Notwithstanding all this secrecy, the destination of the fleet was telegraphed to the Confederates almost as soon as the last vessel dropped past Sandy Hook;

and the fire from the circle of batteries about the doomed fort in Charleston Harbor began immediately. When the fleet arrived at its destination, the bombardment was well under way. To attempt to land troops or stores under the withering fire concentrated upon the fort, would have been madness. The only vessel of sufficient strength to engage the batteries, the "Pawnee," had been separated from the fleet by a gale a few nights before, and had not yet arrived. Sadly the sailors gave up the attempt, and, beating up and down outside the harbor bar, awaited the inevitable end of the unequal conflict. When, finally, after a heroic resistance of several days, Major Anderson and his little band, worn with constant vigilance and labor, destitute of provisions, and exposed to a constant hail of iron missiles from without and a raging fire within, agreed to capitulate, the United States steamship "Baltic," of the Fort Sumter expedition, took him on board and bore him safely to New York. The main purpose of the expedition had failed, it is true; but the Government had made its first decisive move, and public sympathy and confidence were excited.

The preparations for the coming struggle were now being pressed forward on every hand. An incident which occurred soon after the fall of Sumter awakened the greatest enthusiasm throughout the North. The United States frigate "Constitution" was lying at Annapolis, where she was being used by the authorities of the naval academy there for a school-ship. Although the State of Maryland had not seceded from the Union, yet secessionists were to be found in great numbers in all parts of the State. A number of them determined to seize the ship. Besides being a war-vessel of considerable strength, the "Constitution" — or "Old Ironsides," as she was affectionately called — was famous for her many exploits, and dear to the hearts of Americans for her long service under the stars and stripes. "If we can but capture the vessel, and turn her guns against the Union," thought the conspirators, "we will strike a heavy blow at the Northern sympathizers." And, indeed, it would have been a heavy blow to the nation had they captured the old frigate that did such service under Preble in the war with Tripoli; and that in the War of 1812 forced the British to strike their colors, and gave to the United States navy an equal place on the high seas with any nation of the world. The plans of the conspirators were well laid. The ship was manned by but twenty men, and lay above a bar, over which she could only be carried by the aid of a steam-tug.

Fortunately the officers and crew were all loyal. For four days and four nights they watched the preparations being made on shore for their capture. Mysterious signals flashed from the surrounding hills. Armed bodies of men were seen drilling on the shore. All seemed to tend toward certain capture. Yet with no chance of escape the brave men kept vigilant guard, with guns shotted and always primed.

Near Annapolis was stationed the Eighth Massachusetts Infantry, with Gen. Butler in command. News was carried to the general of the perilous position of the "Constitution," and he at once determined to hasten to her relief. Just as the crew of the old frigate had abandoned all hope, the steamer "Maryland" entered the harbor, her guards and decks crowded with the men of the Eighth Massachusetts. Quickly the "Constitution" was prepared for sailing. Her anchors were slipped, all useless weight cast overboard, and, with the "Maryland" as tug, the stately frigate passed slowly over the bar, and out of the grasp of the conspirators.

The "Constitution" was not the only United States vessel that the Confederates were planning to seize. Soon after she escaped from their hands, an event occurred by which a vast quantity of naval stores, and the mutilated but still valuable hulls of some of the most powerful war-vessels in the United States navy, fell into their hands. The United States navy-yard at Norfolk was one of the most valuable of all the governmental possessions. In the great yard was government property amounting to more than twenty millions of dollars. Machine-shops, foundries, dwellings for officers, and a massive granite dry-dock made it one of the most complete navy-yards in the world. An enormous quantity of cannon, cannon-balls, powder, and small-arms packed the huge storehouses. In the magnificent harbor were lying some of the most formidable vessels of the United States navy, including the steam frigate "Merrimac," of which we shall hear much hereafter. Small wonder was it, that the people of Virginia, about to secede from the Union, looked with covetous eyes upon this vast stock of munitions of war lying apparently within their grasp. It did not take long for them to persuade themselves that they were right in seizing it; and, once decided, their movements were vigorous and open. Of their ability to capture the yard, and gain possession of all the property there, they felt no doubt. The first thing to be done was to entrap the ships so that they should be unable to get out of the harbor. Accordingly,

on the 16th of April, three large stone-vessels were sunk directly in the channel, apparently barring the exit of the frigates most effectually. Indeed, so confident of success were the plotters, that in a despatch to Richmond, announcing the successful sinking of the stone-ships, they said, "Thus have we secured for Virginia three of the best ships of the navy." But later events showed, that, in boasting so proudly, the Virginians were committing the old error of counting chickens before they were hatched.

The condition of affairs within the navy-yard now seemed desperate. There appeared to be no chance of getting the vessels beyond the obstructions. The militia of Virginia was rapidly gathering in the town. Among the naval officers on the ships great dissension existed, as many were Southerners, about to resign their posts in the United States service to enter the service of their States. These men would, of course, give no active aid to any movement for the salvation of the United States property in the yard. Any assistance must come from the outside; the beleaguered could but passively await the course of events.

At seven o'clock on the night of April 21, the United States steamer "Pawnee," which had been lying under the guns of Fortress Monroe, hoisted anchor, and headed up the bay, on an errand of destruction. It was too late to save the navy-yard with its precious stores. The only thing to be done was to burn, break, and destroy every thing that might be of service to an enemy. The decks of the "Pawnee" were black with men, — soldiers to guard the gates, and complete the work of destruction within the yard; blue-jacketed tars to do what might be done to drag the entrapped vessels from the snare set them by the Virginians. It was a bright moonlight night. The massive hull of the ship-of-war, black in the cold, white rays of the moon, passed rapidly up the Elizabeth River. The sunken wrecks were reached, and successfully avoided; and about nine o'clock the "Pawnee" steamed into the anchorage of the navy-yard, to be greeted with cheers from the tars of the "Cumberland" and "Pennsylvania," who expected her arrival. The townspeople seeing the war-vessel, with ports thrown open, and black muzzles of the guns protruding, took to their houses, fearing she would open fire on the town. Quickly the "Pawnee" steamed to her moorings. The marines were hurriedly disembarked, and hastened to guard the entrances to the navy-yard. Howitzers were planted so as to rake every street leading to the yard. Thus secure against attack, the work

of the night began. Nearly two thousand willing hands were set hard at work, cannon were dismounted and spiked, rifles and muskets dashed to pieces; great quantities of combustibles were piled up in the mammoth buildings, ready to be fired at a given signal. In the mean time, the blue-jackets were not idle. It was quickly decided, that, of all the magnificent vessels anchored in the harbor, the "Cumberland" was the only one that could be towed past the obstructions in the river. All hands were set to work removing every thing of value from the doomed vessels to the "Cumberland." Gunpowder and combustibles were then arranged so as to completely destroy the vessels when ignited. When the moon went down at twelve o'clock, the preparations were complete. All the men were then taken on board the "Cumberland" and "Pawnee," save a few who were left to fire the trains. As the two vessels started from the moorings, the barracks were fired, the lurid light casting a fearful gleam upon the crowded yards and shrouds of the towering frigate. A little way out in the stream a rocket was sent up from the "Pawnee." This was the signal for the firing of the trains. The scene that followed is thus described by an eye-witness: —

"The rocket sped high in air, paused a second, and burst in showers of many colored lights; and, as it did so, the well-set trains at the ship-houses, and on the decks of the fated vessels left behind, went off as if lit simultaneously by the rocket. One of the ship-houses contained the old 'New York,' a ship thirty years on the stocks, and yet unfinished; the other was vacant. But both houses, and the old 'New York,' burned like tinder. The vessels fired were the 'Pennsylvania,' the 'Merrimac,' the 'Germantown,' the 'Plymouth,' the 'Raritan,' the 'Columbia,' and the 'Dolphin.' The old 'Delaware' and 'Columbus,' worn-out and disabled seventy-fours, were scuttled, and sunk at the upper docks on Friday.

"I need not try to picture the scene of the grand conflagration that now burst like the day of judgment on the startled citizens of Norfolk, Portsmouth, and all the surrounding country. Any one who has seen a ship burn, and knows how like a fiery serpent the flame leaps from pitchy deck to smoking shrouds, and writhes to their very top around the masts that stand like martyrs doomed, can form some idea of the wonderful display that followed. It was not thirty minutes from the time the trains were fired, till the conflagration roared like a hurricane, and the flames from land

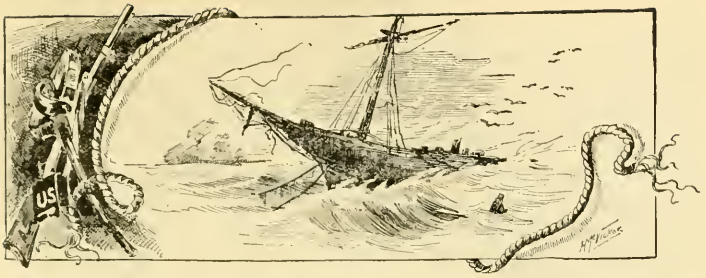
and water swayed and met and mingled together, and darted high, and fell, and leaped up again, and by their very motion showed their sympathy with the crackling, crashing war of destruction beneath.

"But in all this magnificent scene the old ship 'Pennsylvania' was the centre-piece. She was a very giant in death, as she had been in life. She was a sea of flame; and when the iron had entered her soul, and her bowels were consuming, then did she spout forth from every porthole of every deck torrents and cataracts of fire, that to the mind of Milton would have represented her a frigate of hell pouring out unending broadsides of infernal fire. Several of her guns were left loaded, but not shotted; and as the fire reached them they sent out on the startled morning air minute-guns of fearful peal, that added greatly to the alarm that the light of the fire had spread through the country round about. The 'Pennsylvania' burned like a volcano for five hours and a half before her mainmast fell. I stood watching the proud but perishing old leviathan as this emblem of her majesty was about to come down. At precisely half-past nine o'clock the tall tree that stood in her centre tottered and fell, and crushed deep into her burning sides."

During this fearful scene the people of the little town, and the Virginia militia-men who had been summoned to take possession of the navy-yard, were no idle spectators. Hardly had the "Pawnee" steamed out into the stream, when the great gates were battered down, and crowds of men rushed in, eager to save whatever arms were uninjured. Throughout the fire they worked like beavers, and succeeded in saving a large quantity of munitions of war to be used by the Confederacy. The ships that had been fired all burned to the water's edge. One was raised, and re-appeared as the formidable "Merrimac" that at one time threatened the destruction of the whole Union navy.

A great amount of valuable property was saved for the Virginians by the coolness of a young boy, the son of one of the citizens of the town. This lad was within the gates of the navy-yard when the troops from the ships rushed in, and closed and barricaded them against the townspeople. He was frightened, and hid himself behind a quantity of boards and rubbish, and lay there a silent and immensely frightened spectator of the work of destruction. An officer passed near him directing the movements of two sailors, who were laying a train of gunpowder to an immense pile of

explosives and combustibles in the huge granite dry-dock. The train passed over a broad board; and the boy, hardly knowing what he did, drew away this board, leaving a gap of eight inches in the train. When all the trains were fired, this was of course stopped at the gap; and the dry-dock was saved, and still remains in the Norfolk Navy-Yard.



## CHAPTER III.

DIFFICULTIES OF THE CONFEDERATES IN GETTING A NAVY.—EXPLOIT OF THE "FRENCH LADY."—NAVAL SKIRMISHING ON THE POTOMAC.—THE CRUISE OF THE "SUMTER."

THE disparity of maritime importance between the North and the South, and the consequent difficulties to be overcome by the latter in getting a navy, have been already alluded to. As it has been stated, in river-steamers and ponderous rams the South was fairly well supplied; but what was really needed were ocean-going ships, to break the rigid blockade that was slowly starving the Confederacy into submission, — swift cruisers to prey on the commerce of the enemy, and powerful line-of-battle ships, which, by successfully coping with the vessels of the United States on the high seas, should secure for the Confederacy recognition, and possibly assistance, from the great powers of Europe. But how to get these without ship-yards, ship-builders, or seamen, was a task that baffled the ingenuity of the best minds in the South. Immediately upon the organization of the Confederate cabinet, an agent was sent to England to negotiate for vessels and guns. But, though this agent was a man of wonderful resources and great diplomacy, he found an almost insuperable obstacle in the universally recognized law of nations, to the effect that no neutral nation shall sell vessels or munitions of war to belligerents. It is true that this agent, Capt. Bulloch, did succeed in secur-

ing three ships, — the "Florida," the "Shenandoah," and the celebrated "Alabama;" but to do so cost an immense amount of diplomacy and the sacrificing of the strength of the vessels to the necessity which existed for making them appear to be merchantmen. To build an iron-clad in a foreign port, was out of the question; and consequently ships so obtained were forced to fly from any well-equipped war-vessel, and only venture to attack unarmed merchantmen.

The United States vessels which were delivered into the hands of the Confederates by their officers were mainly small revenue cutters, of little use in naval warfare and soon given up or destroyed. Not a single ship of this class made any record of distinguished service for the Confederacy. Several merchant-vessels were captured by the Confederates, who concocted the most ingenious plans to secure success. One bright July morning the steamer "St. Nicholas" was lying at her dock in Baltimore, with steam up, and all prepared for her regular trip down the Chesapeake. Quite a large number of passengers had bought tickets, and lounged about the decks, waiting for the voyage to begin. Among the passengers were a number of mechanics, with tools in their hands, going down the bay in search of work. Shortly before the signal to cast off was given, a carriage was driven down the wharf, and a lady, heavily veiled, alighted, assisted by two gentlemen. The gentlemen stated that she was a French lady, and in ill-health. Accordingly she was at once assigned a stateroom, to which she retired. Soon after, the vessel cast off and headed down the bay. When fairly out of the harbor, the stateroom door opened, and instead of the frail, heavily veiled widow who went in, out strode a black-whiskered man, armed to the teeth. He had no trouble now in speaking English, and at once demanded the surrender of the ship. The honest mechanics dropped their tools, and, drawing concealed weapons, rallied around their leader. They had found the work they started out to seek. The ship was captured, and a new privateer was ready to prey on Northern merchant-ships. Once in the hands of the conspirators, the vessel was run into a little port where the passengers were landed, and a hundred and fifty more Confederates taken aboard. Under the command of Capt. Thomas (the "French lady"), the vessel proceeded to Fredericksburg, where she, and three brigs captured on the way, were delivered to the Confederate leaders. This adventure so favorably terminated, Thomas,

with his officers, started back to Baltimore, to lay plans for the capture of some other unsuspecting craft. But fortune, which had thus far favored him, deserted him at last. On the vessel upon which the conspirators took passage were two police-officers of Baltimore. One of these officers recognized Thomas, and quietly laid plans for his capture. In the harbor at Baltimore stands Fort McHenry. Under its frowning casemates the ships of the United States could lie without fear of attack from the thousands of discontented men who made of Baltimore a secession city. The captain of the "Mary Washington" was ordered by Lieut. Carmichael, the officer of police, to bring the ship into the anchorage, under the guns of the fort. This soon came to the ears of Thomas, who with his men rallied on the deck, and, with revolvers drawn, seemed prepared to make a desperate resistance. They were soon convinced that the officers had ample power behind them, and therefore submitted. On arriving at the fort, a company of soldiers was sent aboard the boat, and the prisoners were marched ashore. But Thomas was not to be found. Search was made in all parts of the boat, without avail; and the officers had decided that he had jumped overboard, with the desperate intention of swimming ashore. Just as they were about to give up the search, a noise was heard that seemed to come from a bureau in the ladies' cabin. Search was made, and there, coiled up in a narrow bureau-drawer, lay the leader of the band. He had been there two hours, and was helpless from cramp and exhaustion. He was placed in a cell at Fort Lafayette; but later, having been given the privilege of walking about the fort, managed to escape by making floats of empty tomato-cans, and with their aid swimming almost two miles. He was afterwards recaptured, and remained a prisoner until released by reason of an exchange of prisoners between the North and South. Soon after his capture, the Federal authorities at Baltimore learned that plans had been made to capture other passenger steamers in the same way; but the ringleader being locked up, there was no difficulty in defeating the plans of the band.

During the first few weeks of the war, before active hostilities had fairly commenced, events of this nature were of almost daily occurrence. On the Potomac particularly, small cruisers were in continual danger of being captured, and put into commission under the Confederate flag. A trading schooner loaded with garden-produce, dropping lazily down the river to the bay, would suddenly be boarded by four or five armed men, her crew

driven below, and the vessel run into some convenient port on the Virginia shore, to re-appear in a day or two with a small rifled cannon mounted on the fore-castle, and a crew thirsting to capture more vessels for the Confederacy. On one occasion a party of congressmen from Washington started down the Potomac for an excursion to Hampton Roads. Their vessel was a small tug, which carried a bow-gun carefully screened from observation by tarpaulin. A short distance down the river, a boat with a howitzer was seen putting out into the stream, and shaping its course directly across the bows of the tug. As the two boats drew nearer together,

BLOCKADING THE MOUTH OF THE MISSISSIPPI.

a demand came from the smaller that the tug should be surrendered "to the State of Virginia." Apparently yielding, the captain of the tug slowed up his vessel, and waited for his assailants to come alongside, which they did until suddenly confronted with the muzzle of a cannon, trained directly on their boat, and a loud voice demanding that they surrender at once, which they accordingly did, and were taken to Washington by their triumphant captors. Many such trivial events are chronicled by the newspapers of the time. The advantage gained by either side was small, and the only effect was to keep the war sentiment at fever-heat.

The first regularly commissioned man-of-war of the Confederate States was the "Sumter," an old passenger steamer remodelled so as to carry five guns. This vessel, though only registering five hundred tons, and smaller

than many a steam-yacht of to-day, roamed over the high seas at will for more than a year, burning and destroying the merchant-vessels of the North, and avoiding easily any conflicts with the Northern men-of-war. Her exploits made the owners of American merchant-vessels tremble for their property; and the United States authorities made the most desperate attempts to capture her, but in vain. In his journal of Dec. 3, 1861, Capt. Semmes of the "Sumter" writes with the greatest satisfaction: "The enemy has done us the honor to send in pursuit of us the 'Powhattan,' the 'Niagara,' the 'Iroquois,' the 'Keystone State,' and the 'San Jacinto.'" Any one of these vessels could have blown the 'Sumter' out of water with one broadside, but the cunning and skill of her commander enabled her to escape them all.

It was on the 1st of June, 1861, that the "Sumter" cast loose from the levee at New Orleans, and started down the Mississippi on her way to the open sea. For two months workmen had been busy fitting her for the new part she was to play. The long rows of cabins on the upper deck were torn down; and a heavy eight-inch shell-gun, mounted on a pivot between the fore and mainmasts, and the grinning muzzles of four twenty-four-pounder howitzers peeping from the ports, told of her warlike character. The great levee of the Crescent City was crowded with people that day. Now and again the roll of the drum, or the stirring notes of "Dixie," would be heard, as some volunteer company marched down to the river to witness the departure of the entire Confederate navy. Slowly the vessel dropped down the river, and, rounding the English turn, boomed out with her great gun a parting salute to the city she was never more to see. Ten miles from the mouth of the river she stopped; for anchored off the bar below lay the powerful United States steamer "Brooklyn," with three other men-of-war, each more than a match for the infant navy of the Confederacy. Eleven days the "Sumter" lay tugging at her anchors in the muddy current of the great river, but at last the time of action arrived. The news came that the "Brooklyn" had started in chase of a vessel, and the mouth of the river was clear. Quickly the "Sumter" got under way, and with all steam up made for the channel over the bar. She was still six miles from the bar when the "Brooklyn" caught sight of her, and abandoning her first chase strove desperately to head her off. It was a time of intense excitement. Each vessel was about equally distant from the bar for which

each was steaming at the highest possible speed. For the "Sumter," it was escape or die. It was too late to fly up the river to the sheltering guns of Fort St. Philip. Should the "Brooklyn" get within range, the "Sumter" was doomed. The "Brooklyn" was the faster vessel of the two, but had the wind in her teeth; while the "Sumter" had the advantage of wind and current. At length the pass was reached, and the "Sumter" dashed over the bar, and out on the smooth blue water of the Gulf of Mexico, well ahead of her powerful foe. The "Brooklyn" quickly rounded to, and a quick puff of smoke from amidships told the crew of the flying vessel that the terrible pivot-gun of their enemy had sent a warning message after them. But there was but a second of suspense, when a great jet of water springing from the surface of the gulf told that the bolt had fallen short. The "Brooklyn" then quickly crowded on all sail, and started in hot pursuit, but after four hours abandoned the chase, put up her helm, and started sullenly back for the river's mouth; while the tars of the "Sumter" crowded shrouds and bulwarks, and cheered heartily for the navy of the young Confederacy.

The "Sumter" was now fairly embarked on her career. The open sea was her territory, and all ships floating the stars and stripes at the mast-head were to be her prey. She was not a strong vessel; and her orders were to avoid any battles with the powerful ships of the "Yankee" navy, but to seize and destroy all merchantmen that should come in her way. Her first purpose was to capture these vessels, and by selling them in neutral ports profit by the prize. But the neutral nations soon refused to admit all rebel prizes to their ports; and, as all the ports of the Confederacy were closed by the blockade, nothing was left but to burn the vessels when captured. Many a floating bonfire marked the way of the little "Sumter," and great was the consternation among the ship-owners of the North.

When four days out, the "Sumter" captured her first prize. She was a fine ship, the "Golden Rocket" of Maine, six hundred and ninety tons. With the United States flag fluttering at the peak, she came sailing proudly towards her unsuspected enemy, from whose peak the red flag of England was displayed as a snare. When the two vessels came within a mile of each other, the wondering crew of the merchantman saw the English flag come tumbling down, while a ball of bunting rose quickly to the peak of

the mysterious stranger, and catching the breeze floated out, showing a strange flag, — the stars and bars of the Confederacy. At the same minute a puff of smoke from the "Long Tom" amidships was followed by a solid shot ricochetting along the water before the dismayed merchantman, and conveying a forcible, but not at all polite, invitation to stop. The situation dawned on the astonished skipper of the ship, — he was in the hands of "the Rebels;" and with a sigh he brought his vessel up into the wind, and awaited the outcome of the adventure. And bad enough the outcome was for him; for Capt. Semmes, unwilling to spare a crew to man the prize, determined to set her on fire. It was about sunset when the first boat put off from the "Sumter" to visit the captured ship. The two vessels were lying a hundred yards apart, rising and falling in unison on the slow rolling swells of the tropic seas. The day was bright and warm, and in the west the sun was slowly sinking to the meeting line of sky and ocean. All was quiet and peaceful, as only a summer afternoon in Southern seas can be. Yet in the midst of all that peace and quiet, a scene in the great drama of war was being enacted. Nature was peaceful, man violent.

For a time nothing was heard save the measured thump of the oars in the rowlocks, as the boats plied to and fro between the two ships, transporting the captured crew to the "Sumter." Finally the last trip was made, and the boat hoisted to the davits. Then all eyes were turned toward the "Golden Rocket." She lay almost motionless, a dark mass on the black ocean. The sun had long since sunk beneath the horizon; and the darkness of the night was only relieved by the brilliancy of the stars, which in those latitudes shine with wondrous brightness. Soon the watches on the "Sumter" caught a hasty breath. A faint gleam was seen about the companionway of the "Rocket." Another instant, and with a roar and crackle, a great mass of flame shot up from the hatch, as from the crater of a volcano. Instantly the well-tarred rigging caught, and the flame ran up the shrouds as a ladder of fire, and the whole ship was a towering mass of flame. The little band of men on the "Sumter" looked on the terrific scene with bated breath. Though they fully believed in the justice of their cause, they could not look on the destruction they had wrought without feelings of sadness. It was their first act of war. One of the officers of the "Sumter" writes: "Few, few on board can forget the spectacle, — a ship set fire to at sea. It would seem that man was almost warring with his

Maker. Her helpless condition, the red flames licking the rigging as they climbed aloft, the sparks and pieces of burning rope taken off by the wind, and flying miles to leeward, the ghastly glare thrown upon the dark sea as far as the eye could reach, and then the deathlike stillness of the scene, — all these combined to place the "Golden Rocket" on the tablet of our memories forever." But it was not long before the crew of the "Sumter" could fire a vessel, and sail away indifferently, with hardly a glance at their terrible handiwork.

The "Sumter" continued on her cruise, with varying fortunes. Sometimes weeks would pass with no prizes to relieve the tedium of the long voyage. Occasionally she would run into a neutral port for coal or water, but most of the time was spent on the open sea. The crew were kept actively employed with drills and exercises; while the officers, yawning over their books or games, longed for the welcome cry from the masthead, "Sail ho!" In September the "Sumter" captured a brig, the "Joseph Park;" and the boarding officer, on examining the log-book, found an entry made by her captain on the day of leaving Pernambuco: "We have a tight, fast vessel, and we don't care for Jeff Davis." The unlucky captain had holloaed long before he was out of the wood.

The "Joseph Park" was the last prize the tars of the "Sumter" had the pleasure of "looting" for many days. Up and down the tropic seas the cruiser travelled, loitering about the paths of ocean commerce to no avail. Often enough the long-drawn hail of the look-out in the cross-trees, "Sail ho-o-o-o!" would bring the jackies tumbling up from the forecastle, and set the officers peering anxiously through their telescopes. But the sails so sighted proved to be English, French, Spanish, any thing but American; and life aboard the "Sumter" became as dull as a fisher's where fish are not to be found. In September Capt. Semmes ran his vessel into a Martinique harbor, to make some needed repairs, and give the sailors a run ashore. Here they were blockaded for some time by the United States frigate "Iroquois," but finally escaped through the cunning of Semmes. Lying in the harbor near the "Sumter" were two Yankee schooners, whose captains arranged with the commander of the "Iroquois" to signal him if the "Sumter" should leave the harbor. If on passing the bar she headed south, a single red light should gleam at the masthead of the schooner; should her course lie northward, two lights would be displayed. Semmes, lying at

anchor in the bay, and chafing over his captivity, determined to break away. He had noticed the frequent communications between the schooners and the man-of-war, and suspected that his course would be spied out. Nevertheless, he determined to dare all, and one black night slipped his cables, and with all lights out, and running-gear muffled, glided swiftly out of the harbor. In the distance he could see the lights of the "Iroquois," as she steamed slowly up and down in the offing, like a sentry on guard. Up in the cross-trees of the "Sumter" sat a sharp-eyed old quarter-master, with orders not to mind the "Iroquois," but to keep a close watch on the suspected schooners. Soon a light gleamed from the main-top of each. Semmes's suspicions grew. "They have signalled our course," said he: "we'll double." The ship's head was quickly brought about, and headed south; then all turned to watch the movements of the "Iroquois." She had headed northward, and was exerting every power to catch the flying vessel supposed to be just ahead. Satisfied with having so successfully humbugged the enemy, the "Sumter" proceeded leisurely on her course to the southward, leaving the "Iroquois" steaming furiously in the opposite direction. "I do think, however," writes Capt. Semmes in his log-book, "that a tough old quarter-master, and a grizzled boatswain's mate, who had clean shaven their heads in preparation for a desperate fight, were mightily disgusted."

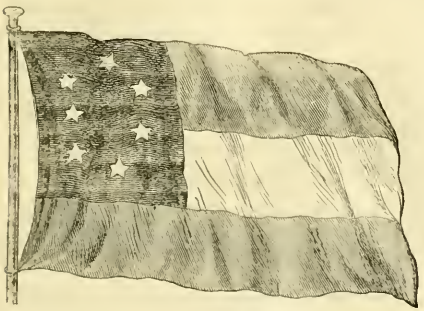
The subsequent career of the "Sumter" was uneventful. She captured but few more vessels; and in January of the next year ran into the harbor at Gibraltar, where she was blockaded by a powerful United States frigate, and finally sold as being worn out. She had been in commission a little over a year, and in that time had captured eighteen vessels, burned seven, and released two on a heavy ransom to be paid to the Confederate Government at the end of the war. It is needless to say these ransoms were never paid. Capt. Semmes, with his crew, proceeded to England, and took command of a mysterious ship, "No. 290," just built at Liverpool, which soon appeared on the high seas as the dreaded "Alabama."

## CHAPTER IV.

THE POTOMAC FLOTILLA. — CAPTURE OF ALEXANDRIA. — ACTIONS AT MATTHIAS POINT. — BOMBARDMENT OF THE HATTERAS FORTS.

IN petty skirmishes and in general inactivity the forces of both contestants idled away the five months following the fall of Fort Sumter. The defeat of the Union armies at Bull Run had checked active operations along the Potomac. On either side of the river the hostile armies were drilling constantly to bring the raw recruits down to the efficiency of trained soldiers. Four hundred thousand men lay in hostile camps within sight of each other. From the national Capitol at Washington the stars and bars of the Confederate flag could be seen floating over the camp at Arlington. Occasionally the quiet would be broken by the crack of a rifle, as some straggler, on one side or the other, took a casual shot at the sentry pacing on the other side of the broad stream. Sometimes a battery would come driving down to the shore, select an advantageous spot, and begin an afternoon's target practice at the hostile camp; but the damage done was immaterial, and after wasting much powder and shot the recruits would limber up their guns and return to their camp. It would have been easy, at almost any time, for either army to have crossed the Potomac and invaded the territory of the enemy; but each hung back in apparent dread of taking the first decisive step.

Abraham Lincoln at this time illustrated the existing condition of affairs, by one of those stories which have made him celebrated as a *raconteur*. A number of politicians, calling at the White House, spoke of the apparent inactivity of the army authorities, and demanded that some decisive move should be made; some powerful preparations to beat back the enemy should he attempt to cross the Potomac. "Gentlemen," said Lincoln, with the twinkle in his eye that always foretold a story, "when I was a boy I saw an incident which I have always recollected, and which seems to me to resemble very much the attitude now assumed by the parties in this impending war. My father owned a dog, — a particularly vicious, aggressive, and pugnacious bull-terrier, — one of these fellows with heavy, short necks, and red, squinting eyes, that seem ever to be on the look-out for a fight. Next door to us lived a neighbor who likewise rejoiced in the possession of a canine of appearance and habits of mind similar to our pet. From the date of their first meeting these dogs had been deadly enemies, and had growled and yelped at each other through the picket-fence separating the two yards, until we were forced to keep at least one dog chained continually. The strained relations between the dogs became a matter of general interest, and speculations were rife among the neighbors as to the probable outcome of a hostile meeting. Those were the times when a lively dog-fight would draw the merchant from his counter, and the blacksmith from his anvil; and it is even on record that an honorable judge once hurriedly adjourned his court at the premonitory sounds of snarling in the court-house square. Well the knowledge that two dogs, pining for a fight, were being forcibly restrained, was too much to be borne by the people of the village; and a plot was concocted for bringing about a fight. One night two pickets were surreptitiously removed from the fence, leaving an opening of ample size to permit a dog to pass. In the morning our dog was sunning him-



FLAG OF THE CONFEDERACY.

self in the yard, when the neighbor's dog rushed to his side of the fence, and made remarks not to be borne by any self-respecting canine. Then began the usual performance of snarls and barks, and baring of white teeth, as the dogs made frantic efforts to get at each other. The neighbors assembled in a crowd, and the knowing ones predicted a lively time when those two dogs found the hole in the fence. Down the line of the fence the two curs walked, their eyes glaring, their jaws snapping, their tongues out, and dropping foam. The racket was tremendous. At each place where the pickets were a little spread, they redoubled their efforts to clinch. They approached the opening. The interest of the spectators redoubled. Now they reached the spot; sprung at each other; their jaws touched, — and each, dropping his tail, slunk away to his kennel. Gentlemen, the attitude of these armies reminds me of that dog-fight."

While the armies of the two contestants were thus idly resting upon their arms, the navy was obliged to discharge duties, which, while they brought some danger, did not gain glory for either officers or men. The joys of Washington society were not for the naval officers. The applicant for promotion, who, when asked by an examiner, "Where is the post of a colonel when his regiment is drawn up for battle?" responded promptly, "In Washington," had been serving in the army, and not with the naval corps. Besides the duties of the officers detailed upon the blockading service, there remained to the navy the arduous task of patrolling the Potomac River, and preventing as far as possible communication between the shores.

This work, as may be readily understood, demanded the most untiring vigilance and the most unflagging energy. The shores on each side of the Potomac are indented with bays and tributary streams in which a sloop or large row-boat can easily be concealed during the day. At night it was impossible to prevent boats laden with contraband goods, or conveying the bearers of secret despatches, slipping across the river from the northern side, and running into the concealment afforded by the irregularity of the Virginia shore-line. Even at this early period of the war, the vigorous blockade of the Confederate sea-ports had created a great lack of many necessaries in the Southern States. Particularly did the lack of quinine afflict the people of those malarial sections comprised within the limits of the South Atlantic and Gulf States. So great was the demand for this

drug, that the enormous sums offered for it led many a speculative druggist north of Mason and Dixon's line to invest his all in quinine, and try to run it through the Potomac blockade. Of course, as the traffic was carried on in small boats, it was impossible to break it up altogether; though by the efforts of the navy it was almost destroyed.

Briefly stated, the duties of the Potomac flotilla may be said to have been to patrol the river from Washington to its mouth, to inspect both sides *daily* if possible, and to observe whether any preparations for batteries were being made at any point, and watch for any transports with troops or provisions, and convoy them to Washington. The flotilla consisted of small vessels, lightly armed; the "Pawnee," the heaviest of the fleet, being a sloop of less than thirteen hundred tons, with a battery of fifteen guns, none of long range. Clearly such an armada as this could be of but little avail against the earthworks which the Virginians were busily erecting on every commanding bluff.

Toward the later part of May, 1861, the Federal Government determined to send troops across the river and occupy the city of Alexandria. The "Pawnee" had for some days been lying off the town, completely covering it with her batteries. She had held this position without making any offensive movement; as her commander understood, that, even should he compel the town to surrender, he had not the men necessary for holding the position. On the morning of the 24th, Commander Rowan saw two steamers coming down the river, laden with Federal troops. He at once sent a boat ashore, and demanded the surrender of the city, which was immediately evacuated by the Virginian troops. When the army of occupation landed, it proved to be Ellsworth's famous Zouave Regiment, made up largely of the firemen and "Bowery boys" of New York City. Ellsworth, while marching through the streets at the head of his command, saw a Confederate flag floating from a mast on top of a dwelling. With two of his men he proceeded to enter the house, go on the roof, and tear down the flag. As he came down the stairs, a man carrying a gun stepped from a doorway, and demanded what he did there. "This is my trophy," cried Ellsworth, flourishing the bit of striped bunting. "And you are mine," responded the man, quickly bringing his gun up, and discharging it full into Ellsworth's breast. The two Zouaves, maddened at the death of their commander, shot the slayer through the brain, and plunged their bayonets

into his body before he fell. Ellsworth's death created the greatest excitement in the North, as it was almost the first blood shed in the war. While the capture of Alexandria was in itself no great achievement, it was of importance as the first move of the Northern armies into Virginia.

Had the efforts of the navy towards keeping the Potomac clear of hostile batteries been supplemented by a co-operating land force, an immense advantage would have been gained at the very outset. As it was, all that could be done was to temporarily check the exertions of the enemy. A battery silenced by the guns from the ships in the daytime could be, and usually was, repaired during the night, and remained a constant menace to the transports going to or from Washington. Under such circumstances, the work of the Potomac flotilla could only be fatiguing and discouraging. Much of it had to be performed in row-boats; and the crews of the various vessels were kept rowing up and down the banks of the river, making midnight excursions up creeks to examine suspected localities, and lying in wait for smugglers, and the mail-carriers and spies of the enemy. They were in continual danger of being opened upon by masked batteries and concealed sharp-shooters. The "prize money," the hope of which cheers up the man-o'-wars-man in his dreariest hours, amounted to nothing; for their prizes were small row-boats and worthless river-craft. The few engagements with the enemies' batteries brought little glory or success. In one battle on the 29th of May, 1861, a flotilla, consisting of the "Thomas Freeborn" (a paddle-wheel steamer, carrying three guns), the "Anacostia," and the "Resolute" (a little craft of ninety tons and two guns), engaged the batteries at Aquia Creek, and pounded away with their pygmy guns for two hours, without doing any visible damage. Two days later the bombardment was renewed, and two of the vessels were slightly damaged. A more serious event occurred at Matthias Point in the latter part of June. Matthias Point was one of the chief lurking-places of the Confederate guerillas, who, concealed in the dense undergrowth along the banks of the Potomac, could pour a destructive fire into any vessels that passed. Commander J. H. Ward of the "Freeborn" planned to break up this ambush, sending a landing party to cut away the trees and undergrowth. The landing party, commanded by Lieut. Chaplin, was to be covered by the guns of the "Freeborn" and "Reliance." It was late in the afternoon when they pushed off for the shore. All seemed

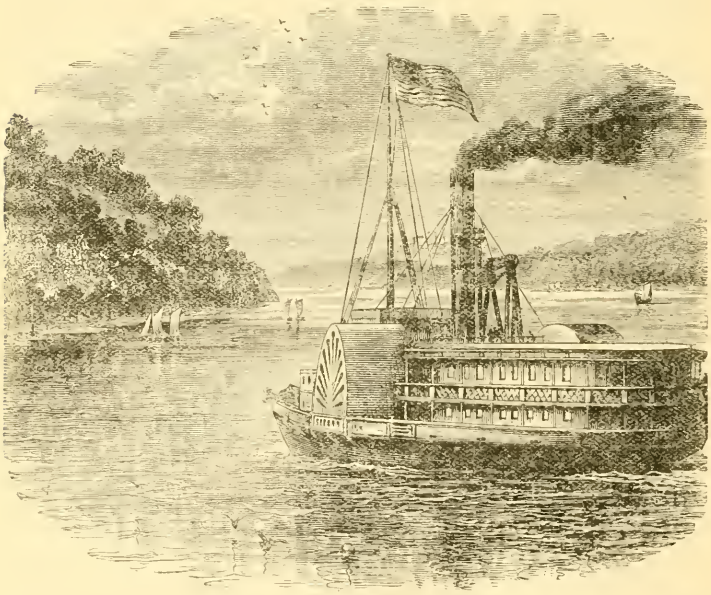
quiet; and the bursting of the shells, which were occasionally dropped into the woods, seemed to have driven the enemy away. Hardly, however, had the sailors begun the work of hewing down the undergrowth, when from all quarters a hot fire was begun, driving them to their boats in a rout. The decks of the two vessels were swept by the storm of lead. Commander Ward, while sighting the bow-gun of the "Freeborn," was struck in the abdomen by a bullet, and died in a few minutes. On the shore the sailors were hurrying into the boats and pushing off to avoid capture. Lieut. Chaplin acted with great bravery, and succeeded in getting all his men away, with their muskets. The last man left on the shore was unable to swim; and Chaplin, taking him on his shoulders, bore him safely to the boat. Though the fire of the enemy was concentrated on the two, neither was hurt, although a minie-ball passed through the lieutenant's cap.

Two months later this same locality was the scene of another bloody disaster to the Union arms. On the 16th of August the "Resolute" and the "Reliance" were ordered to make a reconnoisance of the neighborhood of Matthias Point. After steaming about the shore for some time, and noticing nothing of a suspicious character, a boat was seen on the Virginia shore, and an officer and five men despatched to capture her. They had just reached her, and were in the act of making fast, when a volley of musketry was fired from the bushes not more than five yards away, and three of the crew were instantly killed, and one wounded. The watchers on the war-vessels, lying in the river, sprang to their guns, and threw several rounds of shell into the cover that sheltered the enemy, soon driving them away. The two uninjured men in the boat succeeded in getting her away with her load of dead and dying.

It is easy to understand how exasperating, how infuriating, such service as this must have been to the officers and men of the navy. For a man to risk his life in the heat and excitement of a battle, is as nothing to the feeling that one may be at any time caught in a death-trap, and slaughtered in cold blood.

A more successful expedition was organized in October, by Lieut. Harrill of the steamer "Union." He had been informed that a large schooner was lying in Quantico Creek, and that the Confederates were massing a number of troops there for the purpose of crossing the river. He at once determined to destroy the schooner. Accordingly he manned

three boats at half-past two in the morning, and in the darkness proceeded, with muffled oars, toward the mouth of the creek. Here some difficulty was experienced, as the entrance is narrow and obstructed by sandbars; but working energetically, and in perfect silence, the sailors overcame all obstacles. Once in the creek, they pulled rapidly along within pistol-shot of the shore, until the tall masts of the schooner could be descried in the



NAVAL PATROL ON THE POTOMAC.

darkness. One sentry was on guard, who fled wildly as he saw the mysterious boat emerge from the darkness of the night. The grappling-irons were thrown aboard, and the jackies swarmed nimbly up the sides, and began the work of destruction. A huge pile of combustibles was made in the cabin, and hastily set on fire. The flames spread rapidly; and, though they insured the destruction of the schooner, they also lighted up the creek, showing the boats with the sailors bending to their oars to escape the

storm of bullets that they knew must follow. The glare of the burning schooner, the reflection of the flames on the water, the flash of the rifles from the shores made a wild picture. Occasionally a flash from the river was followed by a deep boom, as a heavy shot left the muzzle of a cannon on the steamers. But through it all, the men escaped; and the projected invasion of the Confederates was abandoned, owing to the loss of their schooner.

All through the war this untiring patrol of the Potomac was continued. Among miasmatic vapors and clouds of noxious insects on mud-flats, in narrow channels whose densely wooded banks might conceal legions of hostile sharp-shooters, the river navy kept up its work. Earning but little glory, though in the midst of constant peril, the officers and men kept up their work, and contributed not a little to the final outcome of the great conflict.

All this time the officers of the naval vessels, riding at anchor in Hampton Roads, were chafing under the enforced idleness. Even the occasional artillery duels with which their army brethren whiled away the time were denied to the wistful blue-jackets. Beyond an occasional chase, generally useless, after a fleet blockade-runner, the sailors had absolutely no employment. At last, however, the opportunity came. The first great naval expedition of the war was set under way.

From Cape Henry, at the mouth of the James River, the coast of Virginia and North Carolina sweeps grandly out to the eastward, like a mammoth bow, with its lower end at Beaufort, two hundred miles south. Along this coast-line the great surges of mighty ocean, rolling with unbroken course from the far-off shore of Europe, trip and fall with unceasing roar upon an almost uninterrupted beach of snowy sand, a hundred and more miles long. Near the southern end of this expanse of sand stands a lighthouse, towering solitary above the surrounding plain of sea and sand. No inviting beacon giving notice to the weary mariner of safe haven is this steady light that pierces the darkness night after night. It tells of treacherous shoals and roaring breakers; of the loss of many a good ship, whose ribs, half buried in the drifting sand, lie rotting in the salt air; of skies ever treacherous, and waters ever turbulent. It is the light of Hatteras.

Some twenty miles below Cape Hatteras light occurs the first great

opening in the stretch of sand that extends south from Cape Henry. Once he has passed through this opening; the mariner finds himself in the most peaceful waters. The great surges of the Atlantic spend themselves on the sandy fringe outside, while within are the quiet waters of Pamlico and Albemarle Sounds, dotted with fertile islands, and bordering a coast rich in harbors. The wary blockade-runner, eluding the watchfulness of the United States blockaders cruising outside, had but to pass the portals of Hatteras Inlet, to unload at his leisure his precious cargo, and load up with the cotton which grew in great abundance on the islands and fertile shores of the sound.

Recognizing the importance of this harbor, the Confederates had early in the war fortified the point north of Hatteras Inlet. Shortly after the fall of Fort Sumter, a Yankee skipper, Daniel Campbell, incautiously running his schooner the "Lydia Francis" too near the stormy cape, was wrecked, and sought shelter among the people at the inlet. When, some days after, he proposed to leave, he was astounded to find that he had been delivered from the sea only to fall a prey to the fortunes of war. He was kept a prisoner for three months; and on his release, going directly to Fortress Monroe, he proved that he had kept his eyes open to some purpose. He reported to flag-officer Stringham that the Confederates had two batteries, — one of ten, the other of five guns, — known as Fort Hatteras and Fort Clark. With these two forts the Confederates claimed that they could control the entrance to Albemarle Sound.

As soon as this information was received, an expedition for the destruction of these forts was organized. It was necessarily chiefly naval, although a land force under Gen. Butler went with the fleet. On Aug. 25, 1861, Hampton Roads presented a scene of the greatest activity. The fleet seemed to have awakened from a long sleep. Every vessel was being hastily prepared for sailing. Two transports, the "George Peabody" and the "Adelaide," were crowded with the soldiers of Gen. Butler's command. From the mainmast of the flag-ship "Minnesota" waved the signal-flags, changing constantly as different orders were sent to the commanders of the other war-ships. At two o'clock three balls of bunting were run up to the truck, and catching the breeze were blown out into flags, giving the order, "Get under way at once." From the surrounding men-of-war came the shrill pipe of the boatswains' whistle, and the steady tramp of the men at

the capstan bars as they dragged the anchors to the cat-heads. The nimble blue-jackets, climbing about the shrouds and yards, soon had the snowy clouds of canvas set. The wind was fresh; and with bands playing, and cheers of blue-jackets and soldiers, the stately squadron sailed down the bay.

But none on board, save the superior officers, knew whither the fleet was bound. Hardly were they fairly on the Atlantic, when the course was shaped to the southward, and that much was settled. But whether New Orleans, Charleston, or Beaufort was the point to be attacked, the sailors did not know.

The squadron which sailed from Hampton Roads consisted of the war-vessels "Minnesota," "Wabash," "Pawnee," "Monticello," and "Harriet Lane;" the transports "George Peabody" and "Adelaide;" and the tug "Fanny." Soon after rounding Cape Henry, the vessels became separated; and when the other vessels reached Hatteras, on the 27th, the "Minnesota" and "Wabash" were nowhere to be seen. As these were the most powerful frigates of the fleet, great fears were felt for the success of the expedition; but at last they appeared on the horizon. A place for landing was selected, and the vessels withdrew into the offing to spend the night. It was determined to begin the attack early the next day.

The morning dawned clear, with a calm sea. At four o'clock the men were summoned to breakfast. At seven the operation of landing the troops was begun. All the surf-boats, barges, and life-boats in the fleet were put to the work. The great war-vessels moved into position, and prepared to cover with a terrific fire the landing of the troops. The first shot was fired by the "Wabash," and the cannonading was at once taken up by the rest of the fleet. The vessels were placed so that a whole broadside could be discharged at once. Thousands of pounds of iron balls were thrown into the forts. Under cover of the cannonading, the disembarkation of the troops began.

But the opposition of the enemy was not the only difficulty to be met. During the time consumed in getting ready to land, heavy banks of cloud had been crawling up from the horizon, and the soft wind of morning had grown into a steady blow. Cape Hatteras was true to its reputation. On the shelving beach, where the troops must land, the great rollers were breaking in torrents of foam. The first life-boats that attempted the landing were swamped, and the soldiers reached the land wet and chilled

through. The surf-boats were stove in. The barges, which had been relied upon to land men in large numbers, proved unmanageable, and were towed away by the "Harriet Lane." When the attempt to land the troops was given up, it was found that but three hundred and twenty men had

ATTACK ON THE HATTERAS FORTS.

been landed. This was too small a party to storm the forts, and the issue of the battle depended upon the great guns of the navy.

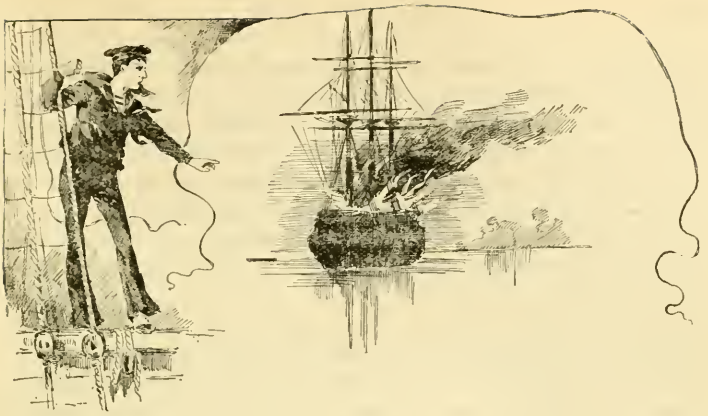
By this time the gunners on the ships had calculated the exact range, and were firing with fearful effect. Broadside followed broadside, with

the regularity of machinery. It was war without its horrors for the blue-jackets, since bad marksmanship or poor powder prevented the Confederate gunners doing any damage. On the gun-deck of the superb frigate "Minnesota," the jackies were working their guns as coolly as though they were on drill. The operations of loading and firing were gone through with like clock-work. The officers could watch the course of the shells until they struck, and instruct the men, without undergoing any danger.

But in the forts the scene was one of terror. As soon as the gunners of the fleet had secured the range, the shells began crashing into the fort, bewildering the untried soldiers, and driving them from their guns. A shell falling in the fort, and bursting, would sweep clean a space thirty feet square. It was madness to try to work the guns. All sought refuge in the bomb proofs, and an occasional shot was all that showed the presence of any defenders in the forts. Soon the Confederates decided to abandon Fort Clark, the smaller of the two, and mass their forces in Fort Hatteras. As a ruse, to check the bombardment of the ships, the flags on both forts were hauled down. This was, of course, taken as a token of surrender; and as the cannonading stopped, and the clouds of gray gunpowder-smoke lifted, the shrouds of the bombarding squadron were filled with men, and cheer upon cheer rang out in honor of the victory. Soon the troops occupied the deserted battery, and the "Monticello" was ordered into the inlet to take possession of Fort Hatteras. She had proceeded only a little way, however, when suddenly a heavy fire was opened upon her from the fort, and at the same time a large body of re-enforcements was seen approaching from the south. The gunners came down from the shrouds, stopped cheering, and began their work again. For a time the "Monticello" was in a dangerous position. In a narrow and unknown channel, she was forced to retreat slowly, under heavy fire from the fort, being hit eight times. The heavy fire of the other vessels, however, soon drove the Confederate gunners from their guns. The sailors worked untiringly, and seemed enraged by the deceit practised by the enemy. One man, while sponging out a gun, preparatory to reloading it, dropped his sponge overboard. Quick as thought he vaulted the gunwale, and re-appeared on the surface of the water swimming for the sponge. Recovering it, he in a few moments crawled dripping through a porthole, to report respectfully to the captain of the gun: "Just come aboard, sir."

The fort abandoned by the Confederates had been occupied by the troops that had been landed; and, under cover of the furious bombardment, the work of landing was vigorously prosecuted. Night came, and with it a gale so heavy that the vessels had to desert their stations, and withdraw into the offing. When the morning broke, however, the sea had calmed sufficiently to allow the gunners to again set about their terrible work.

The second day's firing was even more accurate than that of the first; and the gray-coats were soon compelled to retire to the bomb-proofs, and abandon all attempt to return the fire of the ships. Soon three shells in rapid succession burst close to the magazine of the fort, telling plainly to the affrighted defenders that nothing was left for them but surrender. A white flag was raised, and Commodore Barron went off to the fleet to formally surrender the forts and the eight hundred men of his command. When the terms were concluded, the defeated soldier turned to flag-officer Stringham, and asked if the loss of life on the ships had been very large. "Not a man has been injured," was the response. "Wonderful!" exclaimed the questioner. "No one could have imagined that this position could have been captured without sacrificing thousands of men." But so it was. Without the loss of a man, had fallen a most important post, together with cannon, provisions, and nearly seven hundred men.



## CHAPTER V.

THE "TRENT" AFFAIR.—OPERATIONS IN ALBEMARLE AND PAMLICO SOUNDS.—DESTRUCTION OF THE CONFEDERATE FLEET.

EARLY in the war an event occurred which for a time seemed likely to bring England to the aid of the Confederates. The Confederate Government had appointed as diplomatic commissioners to England two gentlemen, Messrs. Mason and Slidell. They had escaped from Mobile on a fleet blockade-runner, and reached Havana, where they remained a week waiting for the regular English packet to convey them to Liverpool. While in Havana they were lavishly entertained by the colony of Confederate sympathizers there; and feeling perfectly safe, now that they were outside the jurisdiction of the United States, they made no attempt to conceal their official character, and boasted of the errand upon which they were sent.

The United States frigate "San Jacinto," which was one of the many vessels kept rushing about the high seas in search of the privateer "Sumter," happened to be in the harbor of Havana at this time. She was commanded by Capt. Wilkes, an officer who had made an exhaustive study of international law, particularly as bearing upon the right of a war-vessel to search a vessel belonging to a neutral nation. Capt. Wilkes, knowing that by capturing the Confederate commissioners, he could win for himself

the applause of the entire North, determined to make the attempt. By a study of his books bearing on international law, he managed to convince himself that he was justified in stopping the British steamer, and taking from it by force the bodies of Messrs. Mason and Slidell. Accordingly he set sail from the harbor of Havana, and cruised up and down at a distance of more than a marine league from the coast, awaiting the appearance of the vessel. Five days after the "San Jacinto's" departure, the commissioners set sail in the British mail-steamer "Trent." She was intercepted in the Bahama Channel by the "San Jacinto." When the man-of-war fired a blank cartridge as a signal to heave to, the commander of the "Trent" ran the British flag to the peak, and continued, feeling secure under the emblem of neutrality. Then came a more peremptory summons in the shape of a solid shot across the bows; and, as the incredulous captain of the "Trent" still continued his course, a six-inch shell was dropped within about one hundred feet of his vessel. Then he stopped. A boat put off from the "San Jacinto," and made for the "Trent." Up the side of the merchant-vessel clambered a spruce lieutenant, and demanded the immediate surrender of the two commissioners. The captain protested, pointed to the flag with the cross of St. George waving above his head, and invoked the power of her Britannic majesty, — all to no avail. The two commissioners had retired to their cabins, and refused to come out without being compelled by actual force. The boat was sent back to the "San Jacinto," and soon returned with a file of marines, who were drawn up with their muskets on the deck of the "Trent." Every British ship which carries mails carries a regularly commissioned officer of the navy, who is responsible for them. This officer on the "Trent" was somewhat of a martinet, and his protests at this violation of the rights of a neutral vessel were very vigorous. When the first gun was fired, he rushed below, and soon re-appeared in all the resplendent glory of gold lace and brass buttons which go to make up a naval uniform. He danced about the deck in an ecstasy of rage, and made the most fearful threats of the wrath of the British people. The passengers too became excited, and protested loudly. Every thing possible was done by the people of the "Trent" to put themselves on record as formally protesting. Nevertheless, the commissioners were taken away, carried to New York, and from there sent into confinement at Fort Warren.

When the news of this great achievement became known, Wilkes was made the lion of the hour. Unthinking people met and passed resolutions of commendation. He was tendered banquets by cities. He was elected a member of learned societies in all parts of the country, and was generally eulogized. Even the Secretary of the Navy, who should have recognized the grave troubles likely to grow out of this violation of the principles of neutrality, wrote a letter to Capt. Wilkes, warmly indorsing his course, and only regretting that he had not captured the steamer as well as the two commissioners.

But fortunately we had wiser heads in the other executive departments of the government. President Lincoln and Secretary Seward quickly disavowed the responsibility for Wilkes's action. Letters were written to the United States minister in England, Charles Francis Adams, alluding to the proceeding as one for which Capt. Wilkes as an individual was alone responsible. And well it was that this attitude was taken: for hardly had the news reached England, when with one voice the people cried for war. Sympathizing with the South as they undoubtedly did, it needed but this insult to the British flag to rouse the war spirit of the nation. Transports loaded with troops were immediately ordered to Canada; the reserves were called out; the ordnance factories were set running day and night; while the press of the nation, and the British minister at Washington, demanded the immediate release of the captives, and a full apology from the United States.

The matter was conducted on this side with the utmost diplomacy. We were undoubtedly in the wrong, and the only thing was to come out with as little sacrifice of national dignity as possible. The long time necessary for letters to pass between this country and England was an important factor in calming the people. Minister Adams said, that, had the Atlantic cable then been in operation, nothing could have prevented a war. In the end the demands of Great Britain were acceded to, and the commissioners proceeded on their way. The last note of the diplomatic correspondence was a courteous letter from President Lincoln to the British minister, offering to allow the British troops *en route* for Canada to land at Portland, Me., and thus avoid the long winter's march through New Brunswick. The peaceful settlement of the affair chagrined the Confederates not a little, as they had hoped to gain Great Britain as a powerful ally in their fight against the United States.

Soon after the capture of the forts at Hatteras Inlet, the authorities of the Union again turned their attention in that direction, with the result of sending the Burnside expedition to Albemarle Sound.

The coast of North Carolina is honeycombed with rivers, inlets, and lagoons, which open into the two broad sounds known as Pamlico and Albemarle, and which are protected from the turbulence of the Atlantic by the long ridge of sand which terminates at Cape Hatteras. While the capture of the Hatteras forts had given the Union authorities control of Hatteras Inlet, the chief entrance to the sounds, yet the long, narrow island was broken by other lesser inlets of a size sufficient to permit the passage of light-draught steamers. The Confederates had quite a fleet of swift, light vessels of insignificant armament, often only a single gun, with which they occasionally made a descent upon some coaster or merchantman, running close inshore, and dragged her in as a prize. With these swift steamers, too, they effectually controlled all navigation of the sounds. But the greatest advantage that they derived from their control of the sounds was the vast facilities given them for constructing, at their leisure, powerful iron-clads in some of the North Carolina ship-yards; then sending them to reduce the Hatteras forts, and so out into the Atlantic to fight for the destruction of the blockade. All these conditions were clear to the authorities of the Union; and therefore, in the early part of January, 1862, a joint military and naval expedition was fitted out for operation against the Confederate works and steamers in these inland waters. It was in the early days of the war; and the flotilla was one of those heterogeneous collections of remodelled excursion-steamers, tugs, ferry-boats, and even canal-boats, which at that time was dignified with the title of "the fleet." In fitting out this expedition two very conflicting requirements were followed. In the most favorable circumstances, the channel at Hatteras Inlet is seldom over seven and a half feet: consequently the vessels must be of light draught. But the Confederate steamers in the sounds carried heavy rifled cannon, and the armament of the forts on Roanoke Island was of the heaviest: therefore, the vessels must carry heavy guns to be able to cope with the enemy. This attempt to put a heavy armament on the gun-deck made the vessels roll so heavily as to be almost unseaworthy.

In addition to the armed vessels belonging to the navy, a number of transports accompanied the expedition, bearing the army corps under the

command of Gen. Burnside; and the whole number of craft finally assembled for the subjugation of the North Carolina sounds was one hundred and twenty. This heterogeneous assemblage of vessels was sent on a voyage in the dead of winter, down a dangerous coast, to one of the stormiest points known to the mariner. Hatteras was true to its reputation; and, when the squadron reached the inlet, a furious north-easter was blowing, sending the gray clouds scudding across the sky, and making the heavy rollers break on the beach and the bar in a way that foretold certain destruction, should any hardy pilot attempt to run his ship into the narrow and crooked inlet. Outside there was no safe anchorage, and the situation of the entire squadron was most precarious. Several serious mishaps occurred before the vessels got into the small and altogether insufficient harbor between the seaward bar and the "bulkhead" or inner bar. The first vessel to come to grief was one of the canal-boats laden with hay, oats, and other stores. She was without any motive power, being towed by a steam-tug, and, getting into the trough of the sea, rolled and sheered so that she could not be towed. The heavy rolling started her seams, and it was soon evident that she was sinking. With the greatest caution a boat was lowered from one of the steamers, and put off to rescue the crew of the foundering craft. Laboriously the sailors worked their way through the tossing sea to the lee side of the "Grape-shot," and after much difficulty succeeded in taking off all on board, and the return trip was commenced. All went well until the boat came under the lee of the steamer, and the men were about to clamber up the sides. Suddenly an immense sea lifted the vessel high in the air; and in an instant the boat was swamped, and the men were struggling in the icy water. All were ultimately saved, but it was with the greatest difficulty. The "Grape-shot," left to her fate, went ashore some fourteen miles above Hatteras. Her cargo served some practical use, after all; for some horses from the wreck of the "Pocahontas" managed to reach the shore, and kept themselves alive by munching the water-soaked hay and oats.

The "Pocahontas" was one of the steamers chartered by the war department as a horse transport. Her actions during this gale furnish a fair illustration of the manner in which the Government was often deluded into purchasing almost valueless ships. She started with the Burnside expedition from Hampton Roads, freighted with one hundred

and thirteen horses. As soon as the gale off Hatteras came on, she began to show signs of unseaworthiness. First the boilers gave way, loosened from their places by the heavy rolling of the ship. All progress had to be stopped until they were patched up. Then down fell the grates, extinguishing the fires. Then the steering-gear was broken; and, getting into the trough of the sea, she rolled until her smoke-stack broke its moorings and fell over. Finally she sprung a leak and was run ashore. The crew were all saved, but for a long time their chances for life seemed small indeed. Ninety of the horses were lost, some having been thrown overboard ten miles from the land. Others were left tied in their stalls, to perish when the ship went to pieces in the breakers. Those that were thrown overboard near the beach swam ashore through breakers in which no boat nor man could live, and, finding the waste and wreckage from the cargo of the "Grape-shot," lived for days on the hay and oats, soaked with sea-water though they were.

For two days this gale continued. The out-look for the fleet seemed hopeless. The inner bar of the harbor was absolutely impassable. Between the outer bar and the inner were packed seventy vessels. This space, though called a harbor, was almost unsheltered. Crowded with vessels as it was, it made an anchorage only less dangerous than that outside. Although the vessels were anchored, bow and stern, the violence of the sea was such that they frequently crashed into each other, breaking bulwarks, spars, and wheel-houses, and tearing away standing-rigging. A schooner breaking from its anchorage went tossing and twirling through the fleet, crashing into vessel after vessel, until finally, getting foul of a small steamer, dragged it from its moorings; and the two began a waltz in the crowded harbor, to the great detriment of the surrounding craft. At last the two runaways went aground on a shoal, and pounded away there until every seam was open, and the holds filled with water.

A strange mishap was that which befell the gunboat "Zouave." She was riding safely at anchor, remote from other ships, taking the seas nobly, and apparently in no possible danger. Her crew occupied themselves in going to the assistance of those in the distressed vessels, feeling that their own was perfectly safe. But during the night, the tide being out, the vessel was driven against one of the flukes of her own anchor; and as each wave lifted her up and dropped her heavily on the sharp iron, a hole was

stove in her bottom, sinking her so quickly that the crew took to the boats, saving nothing.

But the most serious disaster was the total wreck of the "City of New York," a large transport, with a cargo of ordnance stores valued at two hundred thousand dollars. Unable to enter the inlet, she tried to ride out the gale outside. The tremendous sea, and the wind blowing furiously on shore, caused her to drag her anchors; and those on board saw certain death staring them in the face, as hour by hour the ship drifted nearer and nearer to the tumbling mass of mighty breakers, that with an unceasing roar, and white foam gleaming like the teeth of an enraged lion, broke heavily on the sand. She struck on Monday afternoon, and soon swung around, broadside to the sea, so as to be helpless and at the mercy of the breakers. Every wave broke over her decks. The condition of her crew was frightful. In the dead of winter, the wind keen as a razor, and the waves of icy coldness, the body soon became benumbed; and it was with the greatest effort that the men could cling to the rigging. So great was the fury of the wind and waves, that no assistance could be given her. For a boat to venture into that seething caldron of breakers would have been throwing away lives. So the crew of the doomed ship were left to save themselves as best they might. The night passed away, and Tuesday morning saw the gale still blowing with unabated force. Hoping to lessen the strain on the hull, they cut away the foremast. In falling, it tore away the pipes, and the vessel became a perfect wreck. Numbed with cold, and faint for lack of food, the crew lashed themselves to the bulwarks and rigging; and so, drenched by the icy spray, and chilled through by the wind, they spent another fearful night. The next day the fury of the storm seemed to have somewhat abated. The sea was still running high, and breaking over the almost unrecognizable hulk stranded on the beach. With the aid of a glass, sailors on the other ships could see the inanimate forms of the crew lashed to the rigging. It was determined to make a vigorous attempt to save them. The first boat sent out on the errand of mercy was watched eagerly from all the vessels. Now it would be seen raised high on the top of some tremendous wave, then, plunging into the trough, it would be lost from the view of the anxious watchers. All went well until the boat reached the outermost line of the breakers, when suddenly a towering wave, rushing resistlessly along, broke directly over the stern, swamping the boat, and

drowning seven of the crew. Again the last hope seemed lost to the exhausted men on the wreck. But later in the day, the sea having gone down somewhat, a steam-tug succeeded in reaching the wreck and rescuing the crew. The second engineer was the last man to leave the ship. He remained lashed to the mast until all were taken on the tug. Then, climbing to the top-mast, he cut down the flag that had waved during those two wild days and nights, and bore it safely away.

After this gale died away, the work of getting the squadron over the inner bar was begun. It was a tremendous task. Many of the ships drew too much water for the shallow channel, and it was necessary to remove large parts of their cargoes. The bar, which is known as Buckhead Shoal, was an expanse of quicksand a mile wide, with a tortuous channel ever changing with the shifting sands. Many of the ships stranded, and the tugs were constantly busy in towing them off. Scarcely would one be safely afloat, than another would "bring up all standing" on some new shoal. Two weeks elapsed before all the vessels were safe within the landlocked sound. They were none too soon; for hardly had the last vessel crossed the bar, than the black gathering clouds, the murky, tossing sea, and the foaming billows breaking on the bar, foretold another of the storms for which Cape Hatteras is famed. Through the storm a queer-looking craft was seen approaching the fleet. It was found to be a boat-load of escaping slaves, who had put to sea at random, feeling sure of finding "de Yankees" somewhere. From these men much valuable information was obtained.

Up to this time no one in the fleet, excepting the superior officers, was informed as to the exact destination of the expedition. Now as the signal to get under way blew out from the foremast of the flag-ship, and as the prow of the leading vessel was turned to the northward, all knew, and all cried, "Roanoke Island." This island was heavily fortified by the Confederates, and from its position was a point of considerable strategic importance. It guards the entrance to Pamlico Sound from Albemarle Sound, and into Pamlico Sound open great bays and rivers that penetrate far into the interior of Virginia and North Carolina. On this island the Confederates had erected three forts of formidable strength. These forts commanded the channel through which the vessels would have to pass; and to make the task doubly dangerous, the channel was obstructed with

sharpened piles and sunken hulks, so as to be apparently impassable. Beyond the obstructions was the Confederate fleet, which, though insignificant compared with the attacking squadron, was formidable in connection with the forts. It was the task of the invaders to capture these forts, and destroy the fleet.

It was on Feb. 5 that the squadron prepared to leave its moorings at Hatteras Inlet. It was an imposing spectacle. The flag-ship "Philadelphia" led the naval squadron, which advanced with the precision of a body of troops. Behind, with less regularity, came the army transports. About one hundred vessels were in the three columns that moved over the placid waters of the sound toward the forts. It was five in the afternoon of a short February day that the fleet came in sight of the forts. Signals were made for the squadron to form in a circle about the flag-ship. The early darkness of winter had fallen upon the scene. The waters of the sound were smooth as a mill-pond. From the white cottages on the shore gleamed lights, and brilliant signal-lanterns hung in the rigging of the ships. Through the fleet pulled swift gigs bearing the commanders of the different vessels.

The morning dawned dark and rainy. At first it was thought that the fog and mist would prevent the bombardment, but all doubt was put at an end by the signal, "Prepare for action," from the flag-ship. The drums beat to quarters, and soon the guns were manned by sailors stripped to the waist. The magazines were opened; and the surgeons cleared away the cock-pits, and spread out their glistening instruments ready for their work.

The fleet got under way, and stood up the channel almost to the point where the obstructions were planted. Beyond these were the gunboats of the enemy. The cannonade was begun without loss of time. A portion of the fleet began a vigorous fire upon the Confederate gunboats, while the others attacked the forts. The gunboats were soon driven away, and then the forts received the entire fire. The water was calm, and the aim of the gunners was admirable. The forts could hardly respond to the fire, since the great shells, plunging by hundreds into the trenches, drove the men from their guns into the bomb-proof casemates. The officers of the ships could watch with their glasses the effect of every shell, and by their directions the aim of the gunners was made nearly perfect.

While the bombarding was going on, Gen. Burnside set about landing his troops near the southern end of the island. The first boat was fired upon by soldiers concealed in the woods. The "Delaware" instantly pitched a few shells into the woods from which the firing proceeded, and in a few minutes the enemy could be seen running out like rats from a burning granary. The landing then went on unimpeded. The boats were unable to get up to the bank, owing to shoal water; and the soldiers were obliged to wade ashore in the icy water, waist-deep, and sinking a foot more in the soft mud of the bottom.

The bombardment was continued for some hours after nightfall. A night bombardment is a stirring scene. The passionate and spiteful glare of the cannon-flashes; the unceasing roar of the explosions; the demoniac shriek of the shells in the air, followed by their explosion with a lightning flash, and crash like thunder; the volumes of gray smoke rising upon the dark air, — make up a wonderful and memorable sight.

In the morning the bombardment was recommenced, and the work of landing troops went on. Eight gunboats were sent to tear away the obstructions in the channel; and there beneath the guns of the enemy's fleet, and the frowning cannon of the forts, the sailors worked with axe and ketch until the barricade was broken, and the eight ships passed to the sound above the forts. In the mean time, the troops on the island began the march against the forts. There were few paths, and they groped their way through woods and undergrowth, wading through morasses, and tearing their way through tangled thickets to get at the enemy's front. The advance was slow, but steady, until the open field before the forts was reached; then a change was ordered, led by the famous Hawkins Zouaves, who rushed madly upon the fort, shouting their war cry of *Zou, zou, zou!* Like a resistless flood the attackers poured over the earthworks, and the frightened defenders fled. Before five o'clock the entire island was in the hands of the troops, and the fleet had passed the barricade. During the bombardment the vessels sustained severe injuries. An act of heroism which made the hero celebrated was that of John Davis, gunner's mate on board the "Valley City." A shell entered the magazine of that ship, and exploded, setting the wood-work on fire. An open barrel of gunpowder stood in the midst of the flames, with sparks dropping about it. At any moment an explosion might occur which would shatter the vessel to

fragments. Men shrank back, expecting every moment to be their last. With wonderful presence of mind Davis threw himself across the open end of the barrel, and with his body covered the dangerous explosive until the fire was put out.

As soon as the stars and stripes were hoisted on the flagstaffs of the forts, the Confederate fleet, which had been maintaining a desultory fire, fled up the sound, after setting fire to one schooner which had become hopelessly crippled in the battle. She blazed away far on into the night, and finally, when the flames reached her magazine, blew up with a tremendous report, seeming like a final involuntary salute paid by the defeated enemy to the prowess of the Union arms. When quiet finally settled down upon the scene, and Gen. Burnside and Commander Goldsborough counted up their gains, they found that six forts, twenty-five hundred prisoners, and forty-two great guns had fallen into the hands of the victors. The Union loss was forty killed and two hundred wounded.

The next day was Sunday. It was considered highly important that the success of the day before should be vigorously followed up; and an expedition of fourteen vessels, under Capt. Rowan, was ordered to follow the retreating Confederate fleet and destroy it. The flying squadron was chased as far as Elizabeth City on the Pasquotauk River. Here night overtook the pursuers; and they came to anchor at the mouth of the stream, effectually cutting off all hope of retreat. The Confederates in the vessels lying off the town passed an anxious night. Outnumbered two to one by the pursuing vessels, they saw no hope of a successful resistance. With a courage which in view of the facts seems to be almost foolhardy, they determined to stick to their ships, and fight to the death. The feelings of the inhabitants of the town were hardly less gloomy. So thoroughly impregnable had they considered the forts at Roanoke Island, that they had made absolutely no preparations for defence; and now they found their homes upon the eve of capture. The victorious army had not yet had an opportunity to show the merciful way in which the inhabitants of captured cities were treated throughout the war; and the good people of Elizabeth City may be excused for fearing, that, with the destruction of their fleet, they were to be delivered into the merciless hands of a lawless enemy.

Morning dawned bright and clear. With the greatest deliberation the preparations for action were made on the attacking vessels. It was

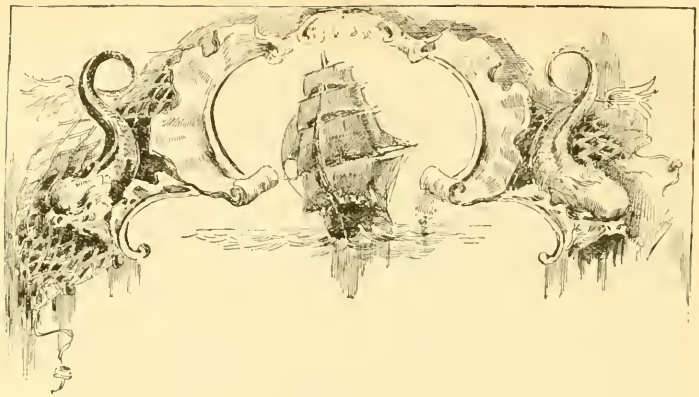
discovered, that, owing to the continuous firing during the Roanoke Island engagement, but twenty rounds of ammunition per gun were left to each vessel. It was accordingly ordered that no long-distance firing should be done; but each vessel should dash at the enemy, run him down if possible, and then board and fight it out, hand to hand. Early in the morning the fleet started up the river. The enemy's fleet was soon sighted, lying behind the guns of a small battery on Cobb's Point. When within long range, battery and vessels opened a tremendous fire with eighty-pound rifles. The approach of the squadron continued until when within three-quarters of a mile the signal was flung out from the mast of the flag-ship, "Dash at the enemy." Then full speed was put on, and firing commenced from bow-guns. The Confederates became totally demoralized. The battery was abandoned when the first vessel poured her broadside into it as she passed. Before the enemy's fleet was reached, many of his vessels were fired and abandoned. The United States steamship "Perry" struck the "Sea-Bird" amidships, sinking her so quickly that the crew had scarce time to escape. The crew of the "Delaware" boarded the "Fanny," sabering and shooting her defenders until they fled over the side into the water. The victory was complete and overwhelming. Three or four of the victorious vessels at once proceeded to the town, where they found the enemy in full retreat and compelling the inhabitants to set fire to their houses. This was quickly stopped, and the invaders became the protectors of the conquered people.

The power of the Confederates in this part of the country being so effectually destroyed, the navy was divided into small detachments and sent cruising up the lagoons and rivers opening into the North Carolina sounds, merely to show the people the power of the United States Government, and to urge them to cease their resistance to its authority. Three vessels were sent to Edenton. As they came abreast of the village, a company of mounted artillery precipitately fled. A detachment of marines sent ashore found a number of cannon which they destroyed, and a nearly completed schooner to which they set fire. Other small places were visited, generally without any opposition being encountered.

A somewhat larger force was sent to a small town named Winton, as it had been rumored that a force of Union men were there disputing the authority of the Confederate Government, and the navy wished to go to

their assistance. The "Delaware" and "Hudson," in advance of the squadron, came within sight of the landing and warehouses of Winton about four in the afternoon. The town itself was hidden from the view of the vessels by a high bluff. It was a clear, quiet afternoon, and all seemed peaceful. The long wharf, running out into the stream, was deserted by all save a negro woman, who, roused from her occupation of fishing, gazed inquisitively at the strange vessels. The place looked like a commercial port going to seed on account of the blockade. The two vessels proceeded on their way unmolested, ranging past the wharf, and apprehending no danger. Suddenly from the woods on the bluff a terrific fire was poured upon the vessels. The negress, having served her end as a decoy, fled hastily to shelter. The bluffs seemed to be held by two batteries of light artillery and a considerable force of armed men. Fortunately the aim of the artillery men was bad, and the vessels sustained no severe damage. Still, they were in a precarious position. The "Delaware" was too near to bring her battery to bear, and was obliged to turn slowly in the narrow channel. The "Perry," more fortunately situated, opened at once on the enemy with shrapnel. But the contest was unequal, and the two vessels were forced to retreat down the river about seven miles, there to await the remainder of the squadron.

Two days after, the flotilla began the advance up the river, shelling the town as they ascended. Once opposite the town, the troops were landed, and the Hawkins Zouaves soon had possession of the bluff and town. Knapsacks, ammunition, and muskets in considerable quantity fell into the hands of the victors; and, after burning the barracks of the enemy, the squadron returned to the base of operations at Roanoke Island.



## CHAPTER VI.

REDUCTION OF NEWBERN. — EXPLOITS OF LIEUT. CUSHING. — DESTRUCTION OF THE RAM "ALBEMARLE."

AFTER the destruction of the Confederate flotilla at Elizabeth City, and the affair at Winton, the Union fleet remained quietly at anchor off Roanoke Island, or made short excursions up the little rivers emptying into the sounds. Over a month passed in comparative inaction, as the ships were awaiting supplies and particularly ammunition. When finally the transports from New York arrived, and the magazines of the war-vessels were filled with shot and shell and gunpowder, they again turned their attention to the enemy. The victories already won had almost driven the Confederates from that part of North Carolina which borders on the sounds. Roanoke Island, Elizabeth City, Edenton, and Plymouth had one after the other yielded to the persuasive eloquence of the ship's cannon, and there was left to the Confederates only one fort, — Newbern, on the River Neuse. As a city Newbern is insignificant; but as a military post it was of a good deal of importance, and the Confederates had made active preparations for its defence.

It was on the 12th of March, 1862, that Commander Rowan started from Hatteras Inlet with a flotilla of thirteen vessels, and army transports bearing three thousand men. The long column steamed down the placid

waters of Pamlico Sound, and, turning into the Neuse River, anchored about fifteen miles below the city. Although the night before the battle, and within sight of the white steeples of the menaced city, all was quiet and peaceful. The banks of the broad stream were densely wooded, and from them could be heard at times the cry of the whip-poor-will, or the hoot of the night-owl. The vessels were anchored far out in the middle of the stream, so as to avoid the deadly bullets of any lurking sharp-shooters. The look-outs kept a close watch for floating torpedoes; while the sailors off duty spun their yarns in the forecastle, and bet pipes and tobacco on the result of the coming battle. The jolly tars of the Burnside expedition had hardly yet learned that war was a serious matter. They had met with but little serious resistance, had captured powerful forts without losing a man, had chased and destroyed the Confederate fleet without any serious damage to their own, and felt, accordingly, that war was a game in which it was their part always to win, and the part of the enemy to run away. Certainly the fight at Newbern did nothing to dispel this idea.

When morning broke, the shrill piping of the boatswain's whistle brought the crew to their places on deck. Breakfast was served, and leisurely eaten; for it is one of the established theories of the navy, that sailors can't fight on empty stomachs. Breakfast over, the work of landing the troops was begun. The point chosen was a broad beach fringed with woods near the anchorage of the vessels. Before landing the troops, the ships threw a few shells into the woods, to make certain that they concealed no ambuscade, as in the disastrous affair at Matthias Point. After two dozen shells had burst, mowing down trees, and driving out frightened animals in plenty, but no sharp-shooters, the long-boats put off from the transports bearing the soldiers for the land attack. As soon as six or seven hundred were landed, they formed in column, and moved rapidly up the beach. The others followed as rapidly as they could be put on shore. The gunboats steamed slowly up the river, keeping abreast of the troops, and throwing shells into the woods ahead of the attacking column. Had any Confederates prepared to resist the march, they must have been driven out of the forest before the Federals came within musket-range. Not an atom of resistance was made. The plans of the invaders seemed irresistible. About half-past four in the afternoon, a puff of smoke rose from the river-bank far ahead of the leading vessel, and in a few seconds a heavy

shell plunged into the water a hundred yards ahead of the flotilla. The enemy was getting awake to the situation. The gunboats soon returned the fire, and the cannonading was continued at long range, without damage to either side, until sundown, when the troops went into camp, and the vessels chose an anchorage near by.

At daylight the next morning, the advance was resumed. The day was so foggy that the usual signals between the vessels could not be seen, and orders from the flag-ship had to be carried by boat. The fleet proceeded up the river; and, when the fog lifted, the ramparts of Fort Dixie — the one that had fired on them the night before — were visible. A vigorous bombardment was at once begun; but the fort failed to reply, and a storming-party sent ashore found it empty. Hoisting the stars and stripes above the deserted bastions, the ships went on. Soon they reached Fort Ellis. Here the firing was sharp on both sides. The fort was a powerful earthwork, well armed with rifles ranging from thirty-two to eighty pounders. The Confederates did but little damage with their guns; their aim being bad for want of practice, and their powder of poor quality. Still, they fought on with great courage until a shell from the "Delaware" burst in the magazine, firing the powder there, and hurling the fort, with large numbers of its brave defenders, high in the air. This ended the fight with Fort Ellis, and the fleet continued its way up the river.

Shortly after passing Fort Ellis, two rows of obstructions were met in the channel. The lower barrier was composed of a series of piles driven into the river-bottom, and cut off below the water; back of these came a row of pointed and iron tipped piles pointing down stream at such an angle as to be likely to pierce the hull of any vessel that should run upon them. Entwined about these piles was a cable connecting with thirty powerful torpedoes. That any vessel could pierce such a barrier seems almost incredible; yet all the vessels of the flotilla passed, and but two were seriously injured. One of the sharp iron piles drove through the bottom of the "Barney," sending the crew to the pumps, and the carpenter down into the hold with his felt-covered plugs. But her damages were quickly repaired, and she went on with the rest of the fleet. Right under the guns of Fort Thompson the second line of obstructions was encountered. It consisted of a line of sunken vessels closely massed, and a *cheval-de-frise* of stakes and logs, that blocked the entire river, save a

small passage close in shore under the guns of the battery. Here was more hard work for the sailors; but they managed to creep through, and ranging up in line, broadside to Fort Thompson, they opened a vigorous cannonade upon that work. The condition of the garrison of the fort was desperate. The troops that had marched up the beach abreast of the vessels began a vigorous attack on the landward face of the fort, while the vessels in the river kept up a vigorous fire on the water-front.

FLAG OF SOUTH CAROLINA.

Soon the gunners of the fort were called away from the river-front to meet the hot assault of the soldiers on the land; and, as the conflict grew close, the ships ceased firing, lest their shell should mow down foe and friend alike. Leaving the enemy to the attention of the soldiery, the ships proceeded up the river past two deserted forts that gave no answer to vigorous shelling. Just as the last vessel was passing Fort Thompson, the attacking troops, with a cheer, rushed upon the ramparts; and in a minute the stars and stripes were fluttering from the flagstaff. This was the last resistance encountered, and at two P.M. the victors were in full possession of the city. The war ships sped up the river after three Confederate steamers that were endeavoring to escape, and soon captured them. One was run ashore and burned, while the other two were added to the conquering fleet. As a last resort, the flying enemy sent down a huge fire-raft, in the hope of burning some of the Union vessels; but this was stopped by the piers of a railroad bridge, and, burning that, effectually cut off Newbern's communication with the world. During the entire two days' engagement, the navy did not lose a man on the ships. Two of a small landing-party were killed, and eleven wounded; while of the soldiers there were killed eighty-eight, and wounded three hundred and fifty-two. This victory gave to the United States

the entire control of the North Carolina sounds and tributary navigable waters.

For years after this, the sounds were occupied by a small squadron of the United States navy, mainly blockading cruisers. It was during these three years of occupation that Lieut. W. B. Cushing performed those wonderfully daring deeds that made him a name and fame apart from all other war-records. These feats so particularly belong to Cushing's record, rather than to the history of any years of the war, that they may well be considered together here. The wonderful exhibitions of daring by which this young officer earned his promotion to the rank of a commander, while still hardly more than a boy, were the ascent of New River Inlet in the steamer "Ellis," for the purpose of destroying the enemy's salt-works, and a blockade-runner at New Topsail Inlet; and finally, the great achievement of his life, the destruction of the ram "Albemarle" in the Roanoke River.

Lieut. Cushing entered the navy during the first year of the civil war, being himself at that time but nineteen years old. A comrade who served with him at the time of the destruction of the "Albemarle" describes him as about six feet high, very slender, with a smooth face, and dark wavy hair. Immediately upon his joining the navy, he was assigned to duty with the blockading squadron on the Atlantic coast. He distinguished himself during the first year of the war, at a time when the opportunities of the service were not very brilliant, by unfailing vigilance, and soon won for himself the honor of a command. In November, 1862, he was put in command of the steamer "Ellis," and ordered to preserve the blockade of New River Inlet on the North Carolina coast, not far from the favorite port of the blockade-runners, Wilmington. The duties of a blockading man-of-war are monotonous, at best. Lying at anchor off the mouth of the blockaded harbor, or steaming slowly up and down for days together, the crew grow discontented; and the officers are at their wits' end to devise constant occupation to dispel the turbulence which idleness always arouses among sailors. Inaction is the great enemy of discipline on board ship, and it is for this reason that the metal and trimmings aboard a man-of-war are so continually being polished. A big brass pivot-gun amidships will keep three or four jackies polishing an hour or two every day; and petty officers have been known to go around secretly, and deface some of the snowy wood-work or gleaming brass, when it seemed that surfaces to be

polished were becoming exhausted. It is no unusual thing to set a gang of sailors to work rubbing away with polish on the flukes of the great anchors, merely to give them work. But while this sort of occupation may drive dull care away from the heart of Jack, his officers are not so easily entertained; and the dull routine of blockading duty at an unfrequented port is most wearisome to adventurous spirits. Particularly was this the case with Lieut. Cushing, and he was constantly upon the look-out for some perilous adventure. One day late in November, information was brought to him that the enemy had established large salt-works at Jacksonville, thirty-five miles up the river. Even thus early in the war, the vigorous blockade was beginning to tell upon the supplies of the Confederates; and one of the articles of which the Southern armies were in the greatest need was salt. The distress caused by the lack of it was great. Many of the soldiers were in the habit of sprinkling gunpowder upon their food to give it a flavor approaching that of salt. In olden days, particularly in the British navy about the end of the eighteenth century, it was the custom for the captains to issue to their crews, before going into battle, large cups of grog with gunpowder stirred in. It was believed that this mixture made the men fight more desperately. But this theory of the doughty sea-dogs of past generations no longer finds any support, and doubtless the soldiers of the Confederacy felt they could fight better upon salt than on their enforced seasoning of gunpowder. At Manassas Junction, when the Confederate army by a rapid movement captured a large provision train, the rush of the soldiers for two or three cars laden with salt was so great that a strong guard had to be stationed to beat back pilferers, and secure a proper division of the much-prized seasoning.

The officers of the Union navy were well informed of this scarcity of salt throughout the South, and accordingly made it a point to destroy all salt-works along the coast. The officers of the Gulf squadron were constantly employed in raiding establishments of this character, of which there were numbers along the coast of Louisiana, Alabama, and Mississippi. Cushing, on hearing of the existence of salt-works in the district over which he stood guard, determined to destroy them. But to do this was a matter of no small peril. Jacksonville was thirty-five miles up a small stream, in the heart of a country teeming with Confederate troops and their guerilla sympathizers. The densely wooded shores could conceal

sharp-shooters, who could easily pick off every man stationed on the steamer's deck. At any point of the entire distance a masked battery might be stationed, that could blow the invading craft out of water, and leave none of her crew uncaptured to tell the tale. Nevertheless, the intrepid young commander determined to make the attempt. His vessel was a small steamer, mounting one heavy gun amidships and two smaller cannon on each side. Without any mishap the "Ellis" and her crew reached the town about noon. On the way up the river a dense column of black smoke appeared ahead, rising above the forest. All thought that the Confederates, hearing of their approach, had evacuated the town, firing it as they retreated. All possible steam was put on, and the little gunboat dashed up the river in the hope of saving some of the property of the inhabitants. But, on rounding an abrupt curve in the river, the mystery was solved by the appearance of a fine schooner, loaded with cotton and turpentine, and drifting helplessly, a mass of crackling flames, down the stream. She was clearly a blockade-runner, freighted with the chief products of the country, and had been waiting a chance to slip out past the blockader, and run for some friendly port. Cushing's bold move up the river had entrapped her neatly, and her owners had fired her and fled. The fire was a magnificent sight. The inflammable cargo, the tarry ropes and cordage, fed the flames, which leaped from hull to main-truck. The cotton burned sullenly, giving forth immense clouds of dense, black smoke. To save her was hopeless, and the "Ellis" kept out of the way of the flying fire-brands and continued on. The expected salt-works were not found, however; and the only trophies to be obtained at the town were about twenty-five stand of arms and two schooners, evidently blockade-runners. The post-office was also visited, and a large mail captured and removed, in the hope of finding therein some valuable information regarding the movements of the enemy. The town itself was one of the sleepy little Southern villages, with wide streets, grass-grown and lined with live-oaks. Children, and boys too young to have been drafted into the Southern army, followed the sailors and marines curiously as they strolled up and down the silent streets. The war had robbed the little city of its men; the blockade had robbed it of its little coasting-trade. Such an air of quiet and desolation hung about the place, that the inhabitants probably welcomed the advent of even the hostile sailors as being some-

thing to break the monotony. After a stoppage of an hour and a half, the "Ellis" started down the river. The quiet of the upward voyage had dispelled any thoughts of danger, but about five o'clock suspicions were re-awakened by the sight of a small encampment on the bank. A few shells thrown over the tents quickly sent the campers scurrying into the woods; and, as the camps seemed to have no artillery, the "Ellis" continued without further hostilities. A short distance down the stream the Confederates opened upon them with two guns mounted on a lofty bluff. Cushing, ever ready for a skirmish, stopped his engine, and cleared away the big pivot-gun for action. The battle-flag was hoisted at the fore, and the crew, with three cheers, set about the work. About an hour of artillery practice followed, when, the enemy being driven from his guns, the "Ellis" proceeded on her way. It was now growing dark, and the tide was rapidly falling. The two pilots on the steamer agreed that daylight and high tide were necessary to get the vessel safely out of the river. With great reluctance Cushing ordered the anchor to be let fall, and proceeded to make preparations for the night. On both banks of the river could be seen the flash of lanterns, proving that the Confederates were aware of the steamer's presence, and were contemplating an attack. To resist such an attack if made in force during the night, seemed almost hopeless; yet the sailors went cheerfully about the work of preparation, getting out cutlasses and revolvers, and putting up the boarding-nettings over the sides. In watchful anxiety the hours wore away. No sound escaped the vigilant ear of the men on duty. But the enemy evidently had abandoned the attack, and when morning broke none were to be seen. With light hearts, and feeling that the worst was past, the little party continued their way, only to find that the worst was yet to come. Soon after daylight, the pilot, mistaking the channel, ran the ship so solidly aground that there was clearly no hope of extricating her. All this time she had been towing one of the captured schooners; and Cushing, with quick decisiveness, ordered that every thing should be removed from the "Ellis" to the schooner. This was quickly done, leaving nothing but the great pivot-gun aboard.

But even when so greatly lightened, the ship would not float, and Cushing saw that all was lost. As a final expedient he sent a boat's crew back after the cannon that the enemy had abandoned the day before,

intending to construct a land-battery with them, and so keep his ship. But the Confederates had already removed the guns, so this forlorn hope failed. Orders were then given for the crew to take the schooner, and drop down the river for a mile or two. The young captain expressed his intention of remaining aboard his craft, and asked for six volunteers to help him fight the pivot-gun. They were quickly found; and, while the remainder of the crew dropped down the river in the schooner, the devoted little band calmly awaited the beginning of the attack. They did not have long to wait. Soon a cannon boomed from the bank, and a heavy shell whizzed over their heads. Then another, from another direction, and a third, and a fourth, each from a distinct battery. They were hopeless odds, yet Cushing and his command fought on until the gunners, getting the range, dropped shot after shot into the doomed vessel. Then fire broke out in three or four places. This was too much; and the seven daring men took to a small boat, and rowed to the schooner. First, however, they loaded the long gun, and turned it on the enemy, in order, as Cushing said, "that she might fight for herself when we could do so no longer." Once in the schooner, they sailed rapidly down the river; and just as they reached the sound a deep boom announced that the fire had reached the magazine, and the "Ellis" was blown into a million pieces. Daring as this adventure was, Cushing was much distressed at its termination; and in his official report he asks for a general court of inquiry, to determine whether he had properly upheld the honor of the nation's flag.

Another daring expedition was undertaken by Cushing when in command of the "Monticello." This was in February, 1864. He was cruising off Cape Fear River. At Smithville, a small town some distance up the river, was a Confederate army-post. Cushing's plan was to proceed up the river in row-boats, burn any vessels that might be at the dock, capture the commanding officers, and escape before the enemy could recover from the surprise. It was a rash and rather useless expedition, but Cushing successfully carried it out. With two boats and twenty men, he went quietly past the guns of the fort, concealed by the blackness of a cloudy night, ascended the river to the town, and landed directly in front of the hotel. A high bank concealed the party from view, and lying in ambush here they managed to capture some negroes, from whom the desired information was obtained. Then with two officers and a seaman,

Cushing walked from the deck to Gen. Herbert's headquarters in so open a manner as to disarm suspicion. Entering the house they met an engineer officer, who tried to raise an alarm, but was quickly captured and gagged. The adjutant-general, never dreaming that any enemy could be so near him, supposed it was a mutiny, and fled hastily, half dressed, to the woods, not even calling out the garrison. Cushing then with his speechless prisoner walked calmly back before the long barracks that sheltered a thousand hostile soldiers, and within a few yards of the sentry on the wharf. Only when the affrighted adjutant-general returned from his hasty trip to the woods did the Confederates know that an enemy had been in their midst. Then there was great excitement, arresting of sentries, calling out of guards, and signalling to the fort that hostile boats were in the harbor. But all too late. Cushing's coolness, courage, dash, and invincible luck had carried him scot free through another dare-devil adventure.

From the "Monticello" Cushing made yet another dangerous excursion into the enemy's country. On this occasion he had a more adequate purpose for his perilous errand. It was believed that the Confederate ram "Raleigh" was in the Cape Fear River above the town of Smithville, the scene of the last adventure. Cushing obtained permission from his superior officer to ascend the river, and try to blow up the ram with a torpedo. On the night of the 23d of June he started, taking with him Jones and Howarth, the officers who had been with him in the previous trip, and fifteen men. The night was pitchy dark, and all went well as they passed the fort and the little town of Smithville. Fifteen miles from the river's mouth, they saw the moon suddenly break through the clouds; and the surface of the river suddenly became bright, revealing to the sentries on shore the Yankee boat fifteen miles within Confederate territory. Quickly the boats turned about, and headed down the river; but this was a mere feint, as Cushing doubled as soon as he reached the shadow of the opposite bank, and continued his course into the hostile territory. Toward morning, when within about seven miles of Wilmington, a very stronghold of the Confederates, he landed, and hid his boat in a neighboring swamp. The men lay in hiding all day; and, just as they were about to start out again, they captured two boats with a Wilmington fishing-party. During the second night Cushing crept cautiously up to within three miles of Wilmington, closely examining the defences of the town and the obstructions in

the river. At daybreak he rowed up one of the creeks until he found the road between Fort Fisher and Wilmington. Here he crouched by a hedge until a mounted mail-carrier came by from the fort. The soldier was captured and dismounted, vastly astonished at the sight of a blue-jacket in that region. Presently, along came the carrier from the town, on the way to the fort. He too was astonished at the sight, but flung back a scornful answer to the demand that he surrender, and galloped hastily away. In an instant Cushing was on the back of the captured horse, and after him; but the fugitive was too well mounted, and escaped. Matters were now becoming very serious. The runaway would doubtless give the alarm everywhere. Immediate flight was imperative. The men had been away from the boat for some hours, and were famished. Food must be had. But how to get it? Cushing's solution of the problem was characteristic. Having captured some other prisoners, he learned that a store was to be found about two miles off. A prisoner about Howarth's size was ordered to strip, and Howarth put on his clothing. The change from the trim blue uniform of a Yankee naval officer to the slouchy jeans jumper and overalls of a North Carolina "cracker" was somewhat amusing, but the disguise was complete. Mounting the captured horse, Howarth rode off in the character of a "poor-white" farmer come in to do his marketing. He chatted freely with the people he met along the road, and securing his provision, returned to the boat without arousing the least suspicion. Snugly ensconced in the thick bushes, the party then proceeded to sup, and after the meal amused themselves in cutting telegraph-wires, and at dark returned to the boat. This was the third night in the river, and Cushing prepared to return. Embarking with his prisoners, he pulled up to the "Raleigh," and found that she would not need his attentions, as she was already a total wreck. Then he began the descent of the river. When a little way down the prisoners were set adrift, with neither sails nor oars in order that they might not report the occurrence too soon. The blue-jackets continued their pull down the river. Just as they reached the mouth the moon shone out, and a quick hail came from a guard-boat. Cushing made no answer, but in a low voice urged his men on, intending to attack the enemy. But in an instant more three boats came out of the shadow, and at the same instant five appeared on the other side. One opening seemed left for the beleaguered boat to dash through. At it they

went, but a schooner filled with troops suddenly appeared blockading this last exit. It looked as though all was up, and those in the boat saw before them the cheerful prospect of execution as spies. But Cushing's pluck and self-possession, which had never yet failed, still stood by him. He resorted to strategy, and, like the hunted fox, threw his pursuers off the track by doubling. He made a dash so rapid and determined towards the western bar, that all the boats of the enemy rushed to block that point. For an instant his own was in the shadow of a cloud. In that instant he had turned, and headed at full speed for New Inlet. His men were as cool as he. With a few vigorous pulls the boat shot out into the breakers where the enemy dared not follow it, and soon after the cutter was hoisted to the davits of the "Monticello," uninjured, after a stay of three nights in the heart of the enemy's country.

It was near the end of the great war that Cushing performed the greatest feat of daring of his adventurous career; and, as on the previous occasions, the scene of the exploit was in the waters tributary to the North Carolina sounds. Early in the spring of 1863 it became evident to the officers of the Union squadron in the sounds, that the Confederates were making arrangements to drive the Yankee ships from those waters, and to re-open the coasting-trade to the people of North Carolina. The chief source of alarm to the fleet was a heavy iron-clad which was reported to be building on the Roanoke River above Plymouth. Full descriptions of this vessel were in the hands of the Union officers; and they saw clearly that, should she be completed, no vessel of the sound squadron, nor perhaps the entire navy, would be able to do battle against her successfully. The river was too shallow for the war-vessels to go up to the point where the ram was being built, and the channel at Hatteras Inlet was not deep enough for iron-clads to be brought in to compete with the enemy when finished. The naval authorities repeatedly urged the army to send an expedition to burn the boat; but Major-Gen. Foster, in command of the department of North Carolina, declared it was of no importance, as the Confederates would never put it to any use. Time showed a very different state of affairs. In April, 1864, the ram was completed, and named the "Albemarle." Her first work was to co-operate with ten thousand Confederate troops in the re-capture of Plymouth, which was accomplished with very little difficulty. Lieut. Flusser was at Plymouth with four small

gunboats, and remained bravely at his post as he saw the powerful ram bearing down upon him. It was half-past three in the morning, and the chill, gray dawn was just breaking over the earth. Above the river hung a mist, through which the great body of the ram could be seen coming doggedly down to the conflict. The "Miami" and "Southfield" were lashed together; and, at the order of Commander Flusser, they started to meet the iron-clad, firing quickly and with good aim. The "Albemarle" came on silently, disdaining to fire a gun. With a crash she struck the "Miami" a glancing blow on the port-bow, gouging off two great planks. Sliding past the wounded craft, she plunged into the "Southfield," crushing completely through her side, so that she began to settle at once. The lashings between the gunboats parted, and the "Southfield" sank rapidly, carrying part of her crew with her. As the "Albemarle" crashed into the two vessels, she fired her bow-gun several times, killing and wounding many of the Union sailors, and killing Lieut. Flusser. When she turned and made a second dash for the "Miami," the latter fled down the stream, knowing that to dare the power of the enemy was mere madness. The "Albemarle" steamed back to Plymouth, and by her aid the town was easily re-captured by the Confederates.

The squadron in the sounds was now in a state of the greatest anxiety. At any moment the impregnable monster might descend the river and destroy the frail wooden gunboats at her leisure. Preparations were made for a desperate battle when the time should come. Captains were instructed to bring their ships to close quarters with the enemy and to endeavor to throw powder or shells down her smoke-stack. Every possible means by which a wooden steamer might cope with an iron-clad was provided.

On the 5th of May the ram put in an appearance, steaming down the river. Deliberately she approached within easy range, then let fly a shot at the "Mattabesett" which knocked her launch to pieces and wounded several men. The "Mattabesett" ran up to within one hundred and fifty yards of the "Albemarle," and gave her a broadside of solid shot from nine-inch Dahlgrens and one hundred-pounder rifles. When these shot struck a sloping place on the ram's armor, they glanced off. Those that struck full on the plating simply crumbled to pieces, leaving no dent to tell of the blow. One beautifully aimed shot struck the muzzle of one

of the cannon on the ram and broke it. The gun was used throughout the fight, however, as the "Albemarle" carried but two and could not spare one of them. The "Sassacus" followed in line of battle. She delivered her broadside in passing. The ram rushed madly at her, but was evaded by good steering. Then the "Sassacus" in turn rushed at the ram at full speed, thinking to run her down. She struck amidships at right angles, and with the crash of the collision came a hundred-pound shot from the ram, that passed through the wooden ship from end to end. Still the engines of the "Sassacus" were kept going, in the hope of pushing the "Albemarle" beneath the water. The iron-clad careened slowly, the water washed over her after-deck; the crew of the "Sassacus," far out on the bow, tried vainly to drop shells and packages of powder down the ram's smoking chimneys. It was a moment of intense excitement. But the ram was too much for her assailant. Recovering from the shock of the collision, she slowly swung around until her bow-gun could be brought to bear on her tormentor, when she let fly a ponderous bolt. It crashed through the side of the steamer and plunged into her boiler. In an instant hot, scalding steam filled the engine-room and spread over the whole ship. Cries of agony arose on every side. Twenty-one of the crew were terribly scalded. Nothing remained but retreat; and the "Sassacus" steamed away from her enemy, after making one of the bravest fights in naval history. In the mean time the other gunboats were pounding away at the ram. The "Miami" was trying in vain to get an opportunity to discharge a large torpedo. Two other vessels were spreading nets about the great ship, trying to foul the propeller. The action continued until dark, when the ram withdrew, uninjured and without losing a man. She had fought alone for three hours against six ships, and had seriously damaged every one of her adversaries. It must also be remembered that she carried but two guns.

The "Albemarle" lay for a long time idle at her moorings in Roanoke River, feeling sure that at her own pleasure she could go into the sounds, and complete the destruction of the fleet. Lieut. Cushing, then twenty-one years old, begged permission to attempt to destroy her. The authority was gladly granted by the navy department, and Cushing began making his plans for the adventure. His first plan was to take a squad of men, with two steam-launches, up the Roanoke, and blow the ram up by means of a

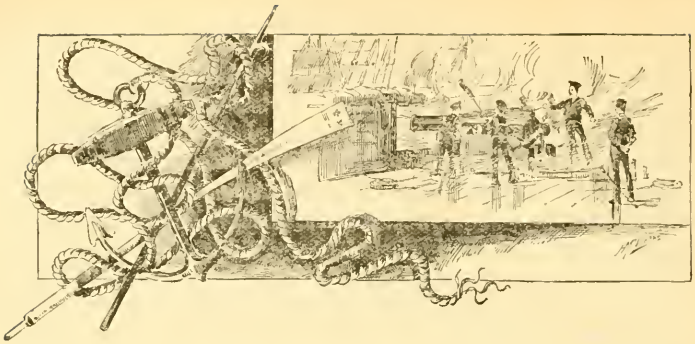
torpedo. The launches were sent from New York, but one was swamped while crossing Delaware Bay.

Cushing, however, was not the man to be balked by an accident: so, cutting down his force one-half, he prepared for the start. Thirteen officers and men made up the little party which seemed bound to certain death. The spirit which animated the blue-jackets during the war may be imagined from the fact that many sailors tried to purchase the privilege of going on this perilous expedition, by offering their month's pay to those who had been selected. To understand what a forlorn hope the little boat-load of men were cherishing, we must understand what were the defences of the "Albemarle." She lay at a broad wharf, on which was encamped a large guard of soldiers as well as her crew. Above and below her, great fires were kept burning on the shores, to prevent any boat approaching unseen. She was surrounded by a boom, or "water-fence," of floating logs, about thirty feet from her hull, to keep off any torpedo-boats. From the mouth of the Roanoke to her moorings was about eight miles; the shores being lined on either side by pickets, and a large picket-station being established in mid-stream about one mile below Plymouth.

To attempt to penetrate this network of defences seemed to be foolhardy. Yet Cushing's record for dash and courage, and his enthusiasm, inspired his comrades with confidence; and they set out feeling certain of success. On the night of the 27th of October, the daring band, in their pygmy steamer, steamed rapidly up the river. No word was spoken aboard. The machinery was oiled until it ran noiselessly; and not a light shone from the little craft, save when the furnace-door was hastily opened to fire up. The Confederate sentries on the bank saw nothing of the party; and, even when they passed the picket schooners near the wreck of the "Southfield," they were unchallenged, although they could see the schooners, and hear the voices of the men, not more than twenty yards away. Not until they came into the fitful glare of the firelight were they seen, and then quick hails came from the sentries on the wharf and the "Albemarle's" decks. But the light on the shore aided the adventurers by showing them the position of the ram. They dashed up alongside, amid a shower of bullets that seemed to fill the air. On the decks of the ram all was confusion, the alarm rattles were sprung, the bell rung violently. The launch running alongside came into contact with the row of logs, and sheered off to make

a dash over it. Cushing, who on these dangerous expeditions was like a schoolboy on a holiday, answered with ridicule all hails. "Go ashore for your lives," "Surrender yourselves, or I shall sink you," he cried, as the gunners on the ram trained a heavy gun on the little launch. Now she was headed straight for the ram, and had a run of thirty yards before striking the boom. She reached, and dashed over. Cushing, standing in the stern, held in one hand the tiller ropes, in the other the lanyard of the torpedo. He looked up, saw the muzzle of a heavy gun trained directly on his boat: one convulsive pull of the rope, and with a roar the torpedo exploded under the hull of the "Albemarle," just as a hundred-pound shot crashed through the bottom of his boat. In a second the launch had disappeared; her crew were struggling in the waves, or lying dead beneath them, and the "Albemarle" with a mortal wound was sinking to the bottom.

Cushing swam to the middle of the river, and headed down stream. Most of his companions were killed, captured, or drowned. In the middle of the stream he met Woodman, who had followed him on previous expeditions. Woodman was almost exhausted. Cushing supported him as long as he was able, but was forced to leave him, and the sailor sank to the bottom. The young lieutenant floated down the river until at last he reached the shore, exhausted and faint from a wound in his wrist. He lay half covered with water in a swamp until daylight. While there he heard two Confederate officers who passed say that the "Albemarle" was a total wreck. That news gave him new energy, and he set about getting safely away. Through the thick undergrowth of the swamp he crawled for some hours, until he found a negro who gave him shelter and food. Then he plunged again into the swamp, and walked on until he captured a skiff from a Rebel picket; and with this he safely reached the fleet, — the only one of the thirteen who set out two days before. So ended the most wonderful adventure of the war



## CHAPTER VII.

THE BLOCKADE-RUNNERS. — NASSAU AND WILMINGTON. — WORK OF THE CRUISERS.

WHILE it is undeniably true that the naval battles of the civil war were in many cases unimportant as compared with the gigantic operations of the mighty armies in Virginia and Tennessee, yet there was one service performed by the navy, alone and unaided, which probably, more than any thing else, led to the final subjugation of the South. This was the blockade.

To fully appreciate what a terrible weapon the blockade is when energetically pursued, one need only look at the condition of the South during the latter years of the war. Medicines were almost unattainable for love or money. Salt was more carefully hoarded than silver. Woollen goods for clothing were not to be had. Nothing that could not be produced by the people of the revolted States could be obtained at their markets. Their whole territory was in a state of siege, surrounded by a barrier only a little less unrelenting than the iron circle the Germans drew around besieged Paris.

Almost the first war measure of Abraham Lincoln was to declare the ports of the Confederacy in a state of blockade. At first this seemed a rash proclamation, and one which could not be sustained by the force at the command of the Federals. It is a rule of warfare, that "blockades,

to be binding, must be effective;" that is, it is not lawful for a nation with a small fleet to declare an enemy's coast in a state of blockade, and then capture such trading-vessels as may happen to run in the way of its cruisers. The nation must have a large enough fleet to station vessels before each of the principal harbors of the enemy, and to maintain a constant and vigilant patrol up and down his coast. If this cannot be done, the blockade is called a "paper blockade," and merchantmen are justified in attempting to evade it. An instance of a "paper blockade" occurred during the early months of the civil war, which will illustrate this point. Wilmington, N.C., was throughout the war one of the favorite ports for blockade-runners. From its situation, the many entrances to its harbor, and other natural advantages, it was the most difficult of all the Southern ports to keep guarded. With the rest of the Confederate ports, Wilmington was declared blockaded; but it was long after, before a suitable blockading-fleet was stationed there. In July, 1861, the British brig "Herald" left Wilmington without molestation. When two days out, she ran across a United States man-of-war, that promptly captured her. The courts, however, decided that a port so little guarded as Wilmington was at that time could not be legally called blockaded, and the brig was therefore released.

But it did not take many months for the energetic men of the Navy Department to get together such a fleet of boats of all kinds as to enable them to effectually seal all the ports of the Confederacy. A blockading vessel need not be of great strength or powerful armament. All that is necessary is that she should be swift, and carry a gun heavy enough to overawe any merchantman that might attempt to run the blockade. And as such vessels were easy to improvise out of tug-boats, ferry-boats, yachts, and other small craft, it came about that by the last of 1861, the people of the seaport towns of the South, looking seaward from their deserted wharves, could see two or three Federal cruisers lying anchored off the outer bar, just out of reach of the guns of shore-batteries. It was a service of no little danger for the blue-jackets. The enemy were ever on the alert to break the blockade by destroying the ships with torpedoes. Iron-clad rams were built on the banks of the rivers, and sent down to sink and destroy the vessels whose watchfulness meant starvation to the Confederacy. The "Albemarle" and the "Merrimac" were notable instances of this

course of attack. But the greatest danger which the sailors had to encounter was the peril of being wrecked by the furious storms which continually ravage the Atlantic coast. The sailor loves the open sea in a blow, but until the civil war, no captain had ever dared to lie tugging at his cables within a mile or two of a lee shore, with a stiff north-easter lashing the sea into fury. In the blockading service of our great naval war, the war of 1812, the method in vogue was to keep a few vessels cruising up and down the coast; and, when it came on to blow, these ships would put out into the open sea and scud for some other point. But in '61 we had hundreds of vessels stationed along the enemy's coast; and where a ship was stationed, there she stayed, to meet the fury of the wind and waves by putting out more anchors, and riding out at her cables storms that would have blown the blockader of 1812 hundreds of miles from her post.

In the earlier years of the war the blockade-runners were nearly all sailing-vessels, schooners, and brigs, that were easily captured. But when the supplies of the South became exhausted, and the merchants of England began building ships especially for this purpose, the duty of the blockading squadron became exciting and often very profitable. The business assumed such proportions that half the ship-yards in England were engaged in turning out fast steamers to engage in it. At first it was the custom to send goods in regular ocean-steamers from England to the blockaded port; but this was soon abandoned, as the risk of capture on the long run across the Atlantic was too great. Not until the plan was adopted of shipping the goods to some neutral port along our coast, and there transferring the cargo to some small, swift vessel, and making the run into the Confederate port in a few hours, did the business of blockade-running become very extensive. Goods shipped for a neutral point were in no danger of being captured by our cruisers, and therefore the danger of the long trans-Atlantic passage was done away with.

Of these neutral points which served as way-stations for the blockade-runners, there were four on or near our coast, — the Bermuda Islands, which lie about seven hundred miles east of Charleston; Nassau, which is off the coast of Florida, and a little more than five hundred miles south-east of Charleston; Havana; and the little Mexican town of Matamoras on the Rio Grande, opposite Brownsville, Texas. The Bermudas were to

some extent used, but their distance from the coast made them inconvenient as compared with Nassau or Matamoras. Their chief trade was with Wilmington, which became a favorite port during the latter years of the war. Havana was popular for a time, and at first sight would appear to be admirably placed for a blockade-runners' rendezvous. But, though the coast of Florida was but one hundred miles distant, it was

NASSAU. THE HAUNT OF THE BLOCKADE-RUNNERS.

surrounded by dangerous reefs, its harbors were bad and far apart, and there were no railroads in the southern part of the State to transport the contraband goods after they were landed. Besides, Key West, the naval station of the Union forces in the South, was unpleasantly near, and the gulf blockade was maintained with more rigor than that on the Atlantic coast. Matamoras was peculiarly well situated for a blockade-running point.

It is on the Mexican side of the Rio Grande River, about forty miles above its mouth. Goods once landed could be shipped in barges and lighters across the river in absolute safety, since heavy batteries prevented the cruisers of the gulf-squadron from entering the river. As a result of this trade, Matamoras became a thriving place. Hundreds of vessels lay in its harbor, where now it is unusual to see five at a time. For four years its streets were crowded with heavy freight vans, while stores and hotels reaped a rich harvest from the sailors of the vessels engaged in the contraband traffic. Now it is as quiet and sleepy a little town as can be found in all the drowsy land of Mexico.

But the true paradise of the blockade-runners was Nassau, the chief port of the Bahama Islands, and a colony of Great Britain. Here all the conditions necessary to successfully evade the blockade were to be found. The flag that waved over the island was that of a nation powerful enough to protect its citizens, and to enforce the laws relative to neutrality. Furthermore, Great Britain was undoubtedly in sympathy with the Confederates; and so far from prohibiting the efforts of her citizens to keep up trade with the blockaded ports, she encouraged and aided them in every way in her power. And aside from her mere sympathy with the struggles of the young Confederacy, England had a most powerful incentive to break down the blockade. In Manchester the huge cotton-mills, employing thousands of hands, were shut down for lack of cotton, and the mill-hands were starving for lack of work; while shut up in the blockaded ports of the South were tons upon tons of the fleecy staple, that, once in England, would be worth its weight in gold. It was small wonder that the merchants of England set to work deliberately to fit out blockade-runners, that they might again get their mills running, and their people fed.

The years of the war were lively times for the little town of Nassau. Hardly had the proclamation of President Lincoln announcing the blockade of all Confederate ports been issued, when at a bound Nassau became prominent as the point of all most suitable for a blockade-runners' rendezvous. Its harbor and the surrounding waters were deep enough for merchant-vessels, but too shallow to allow much cruising about by warships of heavy armament. It was within a few hours' running of three Confederate ports, and it was protected by the flag of Great Britain. Early in the war the Confederates established a consulate in the little town, and

the Stars and Stripes and the Stars and Bars waved within a few rods of each other. Then great shipping-houses of Liverpool sent over agents, and established branch houses. Great warehouses and wharves were built. Soon great ocean ships and steamers began unloading their cargoes at

COTTON SHIPS AT NASSAU.

these wharves. Then swift, rakish schooners began to drop into the harbor, and after discharging heavy loads of cotton would take on cargoes of English goods, and slip out at nightfall to begin the stealthy dash past the watching gunboats. As the war went on, and the profits of the trade

increased with its dangers, a new style of craft began to appear in the little harbor. These were the Clyde built blockade-runners, on which the workmen of the Clyde ship-yards had been laboring day and night to get them ready before the war should end. They were long, low, piratical looking craft, with two smoke-stacks raking aft, and with one or two masts for showing signals, for they never hoisted a sail. Two huge paddle-boxes towered above the deck amidships, the wheels being of enormous size. No structure of any kind encumbered the deck. Even the steersman stood unsheltered at a wheel in the bow. They were painted dark gray, and at night could slip unseen along the water within a stone's-throw of the most watchful lookout on a man-of-war. They burned great quantities of a kind of coal that gave out no smoke, and when steaming at night not a light was allowed on board. Many of these strange craft can be seen now along the levees at New Orleans, or at the wharves in Mobile, where they are used as excursion-steamers or for tug-boats. They were always the merest shells, fitted only for carrying freight, as not many passengers were to be found who desired to be taken into the Confederate territory. Occasionally, however, some soldier of fortune from abroad would drift from Nassau, and thence to the mainland, to join the armies of the Confederacy. The Confederate agents on the island were always on the lookout for such adventurers, and were ever ready to aid them. Sometimes, too, returning agents of the Confederacy from Europe would make the run through the blockading-fleet; so that the blockade-runners were seldom without two or three passengers, poor though their accommodations might be. For the voyage from Nassau to Wilmington, three hundred dollars passage money was charged, or more than fifty cents a mile. To guard against treachery, passage could only be obtained through the Confederate consul, who carefully investigated the proofs of each applicant's identity before issuing to him a ticket.

When the blockade-runner had taken her cargo and passengers aboard, and was prepared for her voyage, every one in the little town came down to the docks to see her start. It was a populace strongly Southern in feeling that filled the streets of Nassau, and nothing but good wishes were to be heard on every side. Perhaps from a house on the hill-side, over which floated the Stars and Stripes, the United States consul might be watching through a spyglass the movements of the steamer, and wishing

in his heart that she might fall in with some Yankee cruiser; but nevertheless, under his very eyes, the audacious racer slips out, and starts on her stealthy voyage. On leaving the harbor, a quick run of fifteen or twenty miles would be taken along the coast, to try the machinery. Great care would be taken to keep within British waters, lest some watchful gunboat should seize the prize thus early in her career. When every thing proved in good working trim, the little vessel's prow would be turned northward, and the perilous voyage begun. For the first day, little danger was to be expected, and the voyage was generally so timed that the outer line of blockaders would be reached just after nightfall. A soldier going to enlist in one of the Confederate cavalry regiments thus tells the story of his evasion of the blockade.

"After a favorable voyage we reached the desired point off Wilmington at the proper time. A brief stoppage was made, when soon the final preparations were completed for running the gauntlet of the Federal blockaders, who would become visible shortly, as we approached nearer shore All the lights in the steamer were extinguished, and all passengers ordered below, only the officers and crew being permitted to remain on deck. The furnaces were replenished with carefully selected coal, which would give the greatest amount of heat and the least smoke. The last orders were given, and every man was at his appointed place. Presently the boilers hissed, and the paddle-wheels began to revolve faster and faster, as the fleet little steamer rose higher and higher in the water from the immense force of the rapid strokes; she actually felt like a horse gathering himself up under you for a great leap. After a little while, the few faint sounds from the deck which we could hitherto faintly catch in the cabin ceased altogether, and there was the stillness of death except for the sounds necessarily made by the movements of the machinery. Then we realized that we were running for our lives past the line of cruisers, and that at any moment a big shell might come crashing through our cabin, disagreeably lighting up the darkness in which we were sitting. Our suspense was prolonged for some minutes longer, when the speed was slackened, and finally we stopped altogether. Even then we did not know whether we were safely through the lines, or whether we had been brought to under the guns of a hostile ship, for we could distinguish nothing whatever through the portholes. However, we were soon released from the

cabin, and walked on deck, to find ourselves safely through the blockade. In the offing could be descried several of the now harmless blockaders, and near at hand lay the coast of North Carolina. Soon the gray dawn was succeeded by a brilliant, lovely sunrise, which lighted up cheerfully the low-lying shores and earthworks bristling with artillery, while from a fort near by floated the Southern Cross, the symbol of the glorious cause for which we had come to fight."

When the blockade-runner, after safely running the gauntlet of the war-ships, steamed leisurely up to the wharves of the blockaded town, every one rushed to the docks to greet her. Her captain and crew became at once people of great importance. They were beset on every side for news of the great world outside. The papers that they brought in were bought eagerly by the people, hungering for tidings of something else than the interminable war. The sailors of the steamer, on being paid off, rambled about the streets of the city, spending their money royally, and followed by a train of admiring hangers-on. The earnings of the sailors in case of a successful voyage were immense. A thousand dollars for the four or five days' trip was nothing unusual for common seamen, while the captain often received eight or nine thousand. But the risk of capture, with the confiscation of all property, and some months' imprisonment in a Federal fortress, rather marred the attractiveness of the nefarious trade. The profits of a successful voyage to the owner of the ship and cargo were enormous. One of the steamers, specially built for the trade, at large cost, has been known to pay for herself fully in one voyage. Indeed, the profits must have been huge to induce merchants to take the risk of absolutely losing a ship and cargo worth half a million of dollars. It is certain, too, that throughout the war the number of vessels captured, while trying to run the blockade, was far in excess of those that succeeded. Up to the end of 1863 the Federal Secretary of the Navy reported 1,045 vessels captured, classified as follows: schooners, 547; steamers, 179; sloops, 117; brigs, 30; barks, 26; ships, 15; yachts and boats, 117. Of course, most of these were small, coastwise vessels. Even among the steamers captured, there were but few of the fleet-going, English-built craft.

There was no small amount of smuggling carried on between the ports of the North and the blockaded ports. The patriotism of the Northern merchant was not always so great as to prevent his embarking in the

traffic which he saw enriching his English competitor. Many of the schooners captured started from Northern ports and worked their way along the coast until that chain of inlets, sounds, and bayous was reached, which borders the coast south of Chesapeake Bay. Once inside the bar, the smuggler could run at his leisure for any of the little towns that stood on the banks of the rivers of Virginia and North Carolina. The chase of one of these little vessels was a dreary duty to the officers of the blockading-ships. The fugitives were fast clippers of the models that made Maine ship-builders famous, until the inauguration of steam-navigation made a gracefully modelled hull immaterial as compared with powerful machinery. Even when the great, lumbering war-ship had overhauled the flying schooner so as to bring a gun to bear on her, the little boat might suddenly dash into some inlet or up a river, where the man-of-war, with her heavy draught, could not hope to follow. And if captured, the prize was worth but little, and the prize-money, that cheers the sailors' hearts, was but small. But the chase and capture of one of the swift Clyde-built steamers was a different matter. Perhaps a lookout in the maintop of a cruiser, steaming idly about the Atlantic, between Nassau and Wilmington, would spy, far off on the horizon, a black speck, moving swiftly along the ocean. No curling smoke would tell of the blockade-runner's presence, and nothing could be seen until the hull of the steamer itself was perceptible. With the quick hail of the lookout, the man-of-war would head for the prize, and start in hot pursuit. Certain it is that the smuggler started to fly before the watchful lookout on the cruiser caught sight of her. The towering masts and capacious funnels of the man-of-war, with the cloud of black smoke from her furnaces, made her a conspicuous object at distances from which the smuggler would be invisible. With the blockade-runners the rule was to avoid any sail, no matter how innocent it might seem; and the appearance of a cloud of smoke on the horizon was the signal for an immediate change of course, and a flight for safety. When the chase began in this way, the cruiser had but little chance of making a capture, for the superior speed of the merchant-vessel would quickly carry her out of sight. Sometimes, however, a favorable wind would enable the pursuer to use her sails, and then the chase would become exciting. With a cloud of canvas set, the man-of-war would gradually overhaul the flying vessel; and when within range, the great bow-gun would

be cleared, and with a roar a shell would be sent flying after the prize. All hands would watch its course anxiously. Generally it fell short. Then another and another messenger would be sent to the enemy, which seldom struck the mark, for gunnery on a rough sea is a difficult art. But the blockade-runner can't stand being used for target-practice long. The cool head of her captain begins to deliberate upon means of getting out of range. Mere running before the wind won't do it: so he makes a long detour, and doubles on his course, heading directly into the teeth of the breeze. Now the cruiser is at a disadvantage. Her sail-power gone, she stands no chance of capturing her game. Her shells begin to fall far short of the smuggler, and soon she ceases firing altogether; and the blockade-runner, driven hundreds of miles out of her course, but safe for the time, goes on her way rejoicing.

One of the most brilliant captures of the war was that of the blockade-runner "Young Republic," by the United States gunboat "Grand Gulf." The "Young Republic" succeeded in evading the watchfulness of the blockading-squadron about the mouth of the Cape Fear River, and under cover of the night ran in safely to the anchorage under the guns of the Confederate forts. The baffled blockaders saw her moving slowly up the river, while the cannon of the forts on either side thundered out salutes to the daring vessel that brought precious supplies to the Confederacy. But the blockading-squadron, though defeated for the time, determined to wait and catch her when she came out. Accordingly the "Grand Gulf," one of the fastest of the United States vessels, was stationed at the mouth of the river, with orders to watch for the "Young Republic." A week passed, and there was no sign of her. At last, one bright day, the lookout in the tops saw the mast and funnel of a steamer moving along above the forest which lined the river's bank. Soon the hull of the vessel came into view; and with a rattle of hawse-chains, her anchors were let fall, and she swung to beneath the protecting guns of the fort. It was clear that she was going to wait there until a dark or foggy night gave her a good chance to slip past the gunboat that watched the river's mouth as a cat watches the mouth of a mouse-hole. With their marine glasses the officers on the gunboat could see the decks of the "Young Republic" piled high with brown bales of cotton, worth immense sums of money. They thought of the huge value of the prize, and the grand distribution of prize-money, and

determined to use every effort to make a capture. Strategy was determined upon, and it was decided to give the blockade-runner the chance to get out of the river that she was awaiting. Accordingly the gunboat steamed away up the coast a few miles, leaving the mouth of the river clear. When hidden by a projecting headland, she stopped and waited for the blockade-runner to come out. The stokers were kept hard at work making the great fires roar, until the steam-gauge showed the highest pressure the boilers could bear. The sailors got out additional sails, clewed up cordage and rigging, and put the ship in order for a fast run. When enough time had elapsed, she steamed out to see if the "Young Republic" had taken the bait. Officers and crew crowded forward to catch the first sight around the headland. The great man-of-war sped through the water. The headland was rounded, and a cheer went up from the crowd of jackies; for there, in the offing, was the blockade-runner, gliding through the water like a dolphin, and steaming for dear life to Nassau. Then the chase began in earnest. The "Young Republic" was one of those long, sharp steamers built on the Clyde expressly for running the blockade. Her crew knew that a long holiday in port, with plenty of money, would follow a successful cruise; and they worked untiringly to keep up the fires, and set every sail so that it would draw. On the cruiser the jackies saw visions of a prize worth a million and a half of dollars; and the thought of so much prize-money to spend, or to send home, spurred them on. For several hours the chase seemed likely to be a long, stern one; but then the freshening wind filled the sails of the gunboat, and she began to overhaul the fugitive. When within a mile or two, she began firing great shells with her pivot-gun. Then the flying blockade-runner began to show signs of fear; and with a good glass the crew could be seen throwing over bale after bale of the precious cotton, to lighten the vessel. In the last thirty miles of the chase the sea was fairly covered with cotton-bales. More than three hundred were passed floating in the water; and the jackies gnashed their teeth, and growled gruffly, at the sight of so much wealth slipping through their fingers. On the high paddle-wheel box of the blockade-runner, the captain could be seen coolly directing his crew, and now and again turning to take a look through his glass at the pursuer. As the chase continued, the certainty of capture became more and more evident. Then the fugitives began throwing overboard or destroying every thing of value: furniture,

silver-ware, chronometers, the fittings of the cabin, every thing that could benefit their captors, the chagrined blockade-runners destroyed. The officers of the gunboat saw that if they wished to gain any thing by their capture, they must make haste. At the risk of an explosion, more steam was crowded on; and the gunboat was soon alongside the "Young Republic," and in a position to give her an enormous broadside. The blockade-runner saw that he was caught and must submit. For lack of a white flag, a pillow-case was run up to the masthead, and the beating of the great wheels stopped. The davits amidships of the "Grand Gulf" are swung out, and a boat's crew, with a lieutenant and dapper midshipman, climb in. A quick order, "Let fall there," and the boat drops into the water, and is headed for the prize. Another moment, and the stars and stripes supplant the pillow-case waving from the masthead of the "Young Republic." An officer who went into the boiler-room found that the captured crew had planned to blow up the vessel by tying down the safety-valve, so that an enormous pressure of steam strained the boilers almost to bursting. A quick blow of a hatchet, and that danger was done away with. Then, with a prize-crew on board, the "Young Republic" started on her voyage to New York; while the "Grand Gulf" returned to Wilmington to hunt for fresh game.

A curious capture was that of the British schooner "Francis," which was running between Nassau and the coast of Florida. On her last trip she was nearing the coast, when she fell in with a fishing-smack, and was warned that a Federal gunboat was not far away. Still she kept on her course until sundown, when the breeze went down, and she lay becalmed. The gunboat had been steaming into inlets and lagoons all day, and had not sighted the schooner. When night came on, she steamed out into the open sea, within a quarter of a mile of the blockade-runner, and, putting out all lights, lay to for the night. Those on the schooner could see the gunboat, but the lookout on the cruiser did not see the blockade-runner. Soon a heavy fog came up, and entirely hid the vessels from each other. The blockade-runners could only hope that a breeze might spring up, and enable them to escape. But now a curious thing occurred. It almost seems as if two vessels on the ocean exercise a magnetic attraction for each other, so often do collisions occur where there seems room for all the navies of the world to pass in review. So it was this night. The anxious

men on the schooner soon found that the two vessels were drifting together, and they were absolutely powerless to prevent it. At midnight, though they could see nothing, they could hear the men on the gunboat talking. Two hours after, the schooner nestled gently up by the side of the gunboat; and a slight jar gave its crew their first intimation that a prize was there, simply waiting to be taken. All they had to do was to climb over the railing. This was promptly done, and the disgusted blockade-runners were sent below as prisoners. Half an hour later came a breeze that would have carried them safely to port.

The gray sea-fogs played many scurvy tricks with the blockading fleets, often letting the runners in right under the muzzles of the great guns. It was far easier to spy out a vessel in the darkest night than in the thick gray fog that enveloped all objects like a blanket. One of the strangest of all the pranks played by the fog occurred in December, 1863, in Charleston Harbor. A wary blockade-runner was creeping out of the harbor, within easy range of the great guns of the fleet, and all hands were trembling, lest at any minute should come the flash of a gun, and shriek of a shell, bearing a peremptory command to heave to. Suddenly the flash came, and was followed by the bang! bang! of great guns from all quarters of the fleet. But the fire seemed pointed in another direction; and the runner made the best of her way out to sea, thinking that some less fortunate vessel, trying to come in on the other side of the fleet, had been captured or blown out of the water. It turned out that a small fog-bank had taken the form of a gray steamer moving swiftly over the water, and had been fiercely cannonaded by the whole Federal fleet. This occurrence gave the Confederates an idea; and they began sending out dummies to engage the fleet, while the true blockade-runners would slip out unobserved in the excitement. One night as the tide was running out with great force, an old hulk was cut adrift from a wharf, and drifted down rapidly upon the Federal fleet. It was just after the exploits of the "Merrimac" had made Confederate rams famous, and the naval officers were a little nervous. The hulk drifted quite into the midst of the fleet before being observed; and when she was hailed she bore down on the largest of the men-of-war as though she were a powerful ram, steered by a commander of desperate bravery. The great gunboat's deck rang with the bo's'n's whistle, as the crew were piped to repel boarders, and to their quarters at the guns. A

fierce fire was poured on the hostile craft, that came on sullenly, as if scorning to make reply. One by one the other vessels of the fleet drew near, and concentrated their fire on the wretched lumber schooner. It was too much for her; and she gave up the unequal combat, and sank to the bottom. For days after, the gallant tars of the squadron blockading Charleston rejoiced in the destruction of a "Rebel ram;" but none of them knew, that, while they were engaged in the desperate contest, two great blockade-runners, heavily laden with cotton, had slipped out of the harbor, and were well under way for Nassau.

Stories of adventure and of desperate pluck and dash abound in the records of the blockade. Both among the officers of the blockading-fleets, and the commanders of the runners, were found great courage and fine seamanship. One fact is particularly noticeable to the student of the blockade: an English captain running the blockade would never dare the dangers that a Confederate would brave without a tremor. A Confederate captain would rush his ship through the hostile fleet, and stick to her until she sunk; while an Englishman would run his ship ashore, and take to the woods. The cases of the "Hattie," commanded by H. S. Lebby, a Confederate, and the "Princess Royal," a fine, staunch, iron steamer, with an English commander and crew, are typical. The "Hattie" was the last runner to enter or leave Charleston Harbor. She was a small, swift steamer; but she made more successful trips than any other runner. Men living in Charleston to-day, who were interested in the work of this little vessel during the war, say that her cargoes were worth at least fifty millions of dollars. She had numerous narrow escapes, but was never captured. Her reputation was such that the Confederate authorities selected her as the vessel to bring in army supplies and ammunition, and at least three battles were fought with ammunition brought in her hold. Her last entrance to Charleston was one night in February, 1865. Eighteen Federal vessels lay anchored off the harbor, and for a runner to venture in seemed madness. But the captain of the "Hattie" was used to taking desperate chances, and he proposed to enter that harbor. The ship had been freshly painted a blue-white, and as she drifted along the water, with all lights out, looked like a bank of mist. She was within two hundred yards of the outer row of blockaders before her presence was detected. Suddenly fire was opened on her from the nearest gunboat, and

in an instant the air was full of rockets announcing her presence. The little vessel had no means of retaliation: all there was for her to do was to dash through the fire and make for the city. Steam was crowded on; and she flew up the channel, running the gauntlet of the fleet, and escaping almost untouched. Then came the real peril. Just below Fort Sumter were two barges anchored in the channel, and filled with armed men. Past these she dashed, her great speed saving her from boarding; but she received the fire of both boats, which wounded several of her crew, and cut off the fingers of the pilot's hand resting on the wheel. This danger past, there was one more to be met. A large monitor lay anchored up the harbor, and the "Hattie" was running so close to her that the commands of the officers in the turret could be clearly heard. One after the other the two great guns were fired, both shots missing; and the "Hattie," safely past the gauntlet, sailed up to the dock in triumph. But by that time it was clear that the last days of the war were near at hand, and accordingly the work of unloading and reloading the vessel for her outward trip was pressed with the greatest vigor. All the time she lay at her dock, Charleston was being vigorously bombarded by the Federal men-of-war lying outside the harbor. The bay fairly swarmed with blockading cruisers; yet a week later the little steamer slipped out through a fleet of twenty-six cruisers without being hailed, and carried her cotton safely to market. When the news of Lee's surrender was received, she was lying safe at her dock in Nassau.

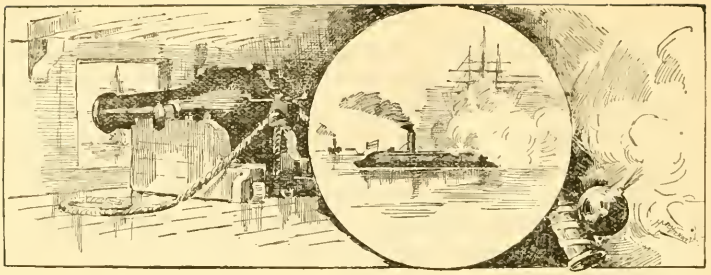
The "Princess Royal," to which we have alluded, was a large iron screw steamer, freighted with drugs, army supplies, guns, and two engines and boilers for two iron-clads in Charleston Harbor, — a most valuable and important cargo for the Confederates. She made the run from Nassau to a point near the coast without adventure, and in the early gray of the morning was stealing up the coast towards the harbor, when a blockader caught sight of her, and started in pursuit. The later began firing when a mile and a half away; and, though there was hardly a chance of the shots taking effect, the cannonade gave the captain of the runner the cold shakes. His boat was one of the fastest on the ocean, and he needed only to put on steam to escape all the blockaders on the coast. But he was a thorough paced coward; and, thinking only of his own safety, he headed the craft for the beach, and with his crew fled into the woods. The valuable ship and her cargo fell into the hands of the Federals.

Sometimes runners were captured through apparently the most trivial accidents. One ship, heavily laden with army supplies, and carrying a large number of passengers, was running through the blockading-fleet, and seemed sure of escape. All lights were out, the passengers were in the cabin, not a word was to be heard on deck, even the commands of the officers being delivered in whispers. Suddenly a prolonged cock-crow rent the air, and, with the silence of every thing surrounding, sounded like a clarion peal from a trumpet. The deck-hands rushed for a box of poultry on the deck, and dragged out bird after bird, wringing their necks. The true offender was almost the last to be caught, and avenged the deaths of his brothers by crowing vigorously all the time. The noise was enough to alarm the blockaders; and in a moment the hail, "Surrender, or we'll blow you out of water!" brought the unlucky runner to a standstill,—a prisoner. The "Southern Cross" narrowly escaped capture on account of the stupidity of an Irish deck-hand, whose craving for tobacco proved too strong for his discretion. The ship was steaming slyly by two cruisers, and in the darkness would have escaped unseen, when the deck-hand, who had been without a smoke as long as he could stand it, lit a match and puffed away at his pipe. The tiny flame was enough for the cruisers, and they began a spirited cannonade. The "Southern Cross" ran for her life. The shooting was guess-work, but the gunners on the cruisers showed all the proverbial Yankee skill at guessing. The first ball carried away the roof of the pilot-house, and the second ripped away the railing along the deck for thirty feet. But the captain was plucky, and made a run for it. He was forced to pass within a hundred feet of one of the cruisers; and as he saw the muzzles of the great guns bearing on his ship, he heard the command, "Heave to, or I'll sink you." But he took his chances, and escaped with only the damage caused by a solid shot crashing through the hull.

One of the strangest experiences of all was that of the captain of a blockade-runner putting in to Wilmington one bitter cold night, when the snow was blowing in clouds, and the fingers of the men at the wheel and the sailors on watch were frostbitten. The runner had reached the harbor safely; but there in channel lay a blockader in such a position that any ship coming in must pass within a hundred feet of her. The Confederate had a light-draught vessel, and tried to squeeze through.

When he passed the gunboat, only twelve feet of space separated the two vessels; and he saw a lookout, with his arms on the rail, looking right at the passing vessel. The Confederate expected an immediate alarm, but it did not come. Wondering at the cause, but happy in his luck, he sped on, and gained the harbor safely. Some days after, he learned that the lookout was a dead man, frozen at his post of duty.

It will readily be understood that the inducements offered to blockade-runners must have been immense to persuade men to run such risks. The officers and sailors made money easily, and spent it royally when they reached Nassau. "I never expect to see such flush times again in my life," said a blockade-running captain, speaking of Nassau. "Money was as plentiful as dirt. I have seen a man toss up a twenty-dollar gold piece on "heads or tails," and it would be followed by a score of the yellow boys in five seconds. There were times when the bank-vaults could not hold all the gold, and the coins were dumped down by the bushel, and guarded by soldiers. Men wagered, gambled, drank, and seemed crazy to get rid of their money. I once saw two captains bet five hundred dollars each on the length of a certain porch. Again I saw a wager of eight hundred dollars a side as to how many would be at the dinner-table of a certain hotel. The Confederates were paying the English big prices for goods, but multiplying the figures by five, seven, and ten as soon as the goods were landed in Charleston. Ten dollars invested in quinine in Nassau would bring from four hundred to six hundred dollars in Charleston. A pair of four-dollar boots would bring from fourteen to sixteen dollars; a two-dollar hat would bring eight dollars, and so on through all the list of goods brought in. Every successful captain might have made a fortune in a year; but it is not believed that five out of the whole number had a thousand dollars on hand when the war closed. It was come easy, go easy"



## CHAPTER VIII.

DUPONT'S EXPEDITION TO HILTON HEAD AND PORT ROYAL. — THE FIERY CIRCLE.

THE great joint naval and military expedition, which in August, 1861, had reduced the forts at Hatteras Inlet, and, continuing its progress, had, by successive victories, brought Roanoke Island, Newbern, Elizabeth City, and the Sounds of Pamlico and Albemarle under the sway of the Federal Government, was but the first of a series of expeditions intended to drive the Confederates from the Atlantic seaboard, and secure for the United States vessels safe harbors and coaling stations in the bays and inlets along the South Atlantic coast. The proper maintenance of the blockade made it necessary that the seaboard should be in the hands of the Federals. For a blockader off Charleston or Wilmington to be forced to return to Hampton Roads to coal or to make repairs, would entail the loss of weeks, perhaps months, of valuable time. Besides, the sounds and inlets with which that irregular coast is honey-combed were of great use to the Confederates, who could construct at their leisure great rams like the "Merrimac" or "Albemarle," and hurl them against the fleet with the hope of breaking the blockade. Such opportunities were eagerly seized by the Confederates whenever offered; and in many cases the defeating of their purposes seems almost providen

tial, so great was the seeming disparity between the attacking ram and the forces which finally repulsed it.

In reviewing the part of the navy in the civil war, we find that it acted like a great iron band, ever drawing closer and closer about the Confederacy, forcing the Southern armies from one point after another, until at last the whole coast was in the hands of the Unionists, and the Confederates were driven into the interior, there to be dealt with by the Northern armies. One is reminded of that iron chamber in Poe's story, which day by day grows smaller and smaller, until the wretched prisoner within is forced into the pit yawning in the centre. So, during the war, the Confederates lost Hatteras Inlet, Roanoke Island, Hilton Head, Fernandina, Mobile, New Orleans, and Galveston comparatively early in the struggle. Wilmington, behind the almost impregnable bastions of Fort Fisher, and Charleston, surrounded by a cordon of defensive forts, remained the last strongholds of the Confederacy on the Atlantic coast, until the final downfall of the great uprising.

Shortly after the capture of the Hatteras Forts, the navy department saw the need of a harbor and base of naval operations farther south. Charleston, with its powerful defences, was deemed impregnable at that time; and elaborate descriptions of the Southern coast were prepared, setting forth the advantages and disadvantages of available Southern ports. Fernandina, Brunswick, Port Royal, and Bull's Bay, were duly considered; and, while the Navy Department was debating which point to seize, Admiral Dupont was diligently fitting out an expedition to be in readiness to attack any that should be determined upon. Up to the last moment it was thought that Fernandina would be selected. But finally, with the advice of Gen. Sherman, it was determined to make the attempt to wrest Port Royal from the Confederates.

Port Royal is the general name given to a broad body of water formed by the confluence of the Broad and Beaufort Rivers, and opening into the Atlantic Ocean on the South Carolina coast, about midway between Charleston and Savannah. No more beautiful region is to be found in the world. Far enough south to escape the rigors of the northern winters, and far enough north to be free from the enervating heat of the tropics; honeycombed by broad, salt-water lagoons, giving moisture and mildness to the air, — the country about Port Royal is like a great garden; and even

to day, ravaged though it was by the storms of war, it shows many traces of its former beauty. It is in this region that are found the famous Sea Islands, on which grows cotton so much more fleecy and fine of fibre than the product of the interior, that it is known the world over as Sea Island cotton, and sells at the highest price in the markets of England. In '61 the islands bore the great hospitable manor-houses of the Southern planters; broad of rooms and wide of piazzas, and always open for the entertainment of travellers, were they friends or strangers. The planters living there were among the wealthiest in the South, at a time when all planters were wealthy. They numbered their slaves by thousands. Standing on the broad piazza of one of these Southern homes, one could see the rows of rough huts that made up the negro quarters, and hear faintly the sound of the banjo and rude negro melodies, mingling with the music of piano or harp within the parlor of the mansion-house. Refined by education and travel, the planters of the region about Port Royal made up a courtly society, until war burst upon them, and reduced their estates to wildernesses, and themselves to beggary.

At the head of the Beaufort River stood the little town of Beaufort. Before the war this was a thriving place; its magnificent harbor made it easily accessible for the largest merchant-ships, and the richly productive country round about furnished heavy cargoes of the fleecy staple that gave to the South the name of the "cotton kingdom." On Saturdays and holidays the broad streets of Beaufort would be crowded with carriages and horsemen from the neighboring plantations. The planters, in broad-brimmed hats and suits of snowy linen, thronged the broad piazzas of the hotel, or grouped together in the shade of the spreading trees that lined the streets, discussing the cotton crops and prices. Now all is changed. Beaufort is a sleepy little village, with no sign of trade, domestic or foreign; and the country round about, once dotted with handsome plantation homes, now seems a very wilderness, save where Northerners have erected for themselves winter homes on the Sea Islands.

It was late in October, 1861, when the final determination to attack the forts at Port Royal was reached. For weeks before, the squadron lying at Hampton Roads had been making preparations for a great naval movement, and all the newspapers of the North were filled with wise speculations as to its objective point. Reporters, correspondents, and editors were alike baffled in their efforts to secure accurate information; and even the commanders of

the men-of-war were ignorant of their destination. But it seems that the Confederates were warned by some of their sympathizers in Washington, and the destination of the fleet was better known south of Mason and Dixon's line than in the North. On Tuesday, Oct. 29, the squadron was all ready for the voyage. It was by far the most powerful fleet ever gathered under the flag of the United States. Twenty-five vessels laden with coal had sailed the day before. On the placid waters of the bay, under the

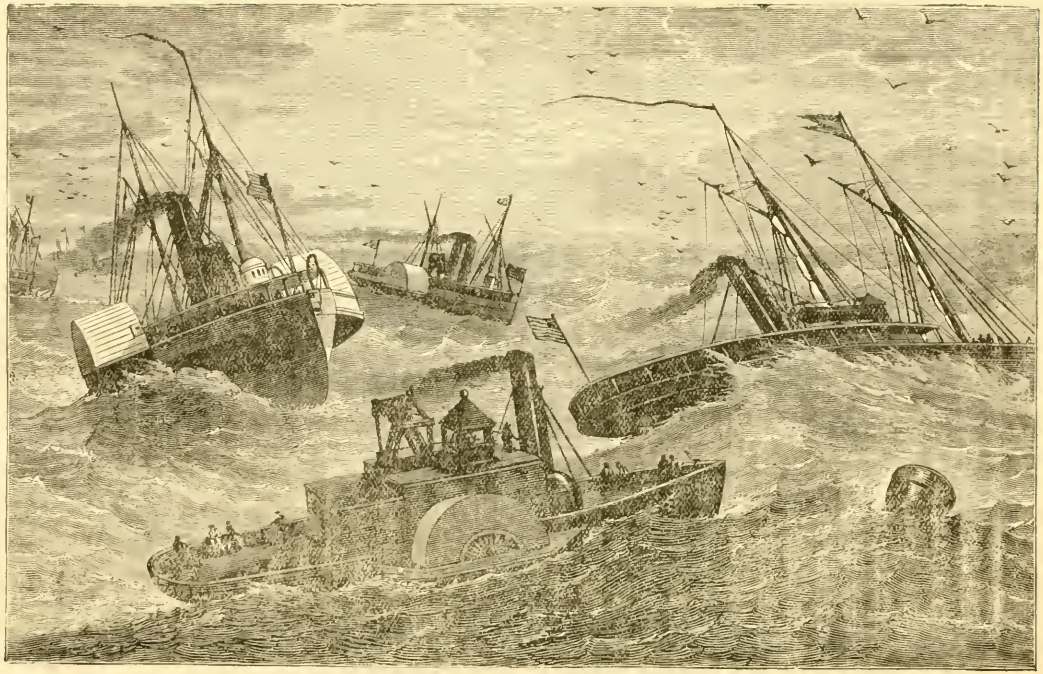
FORTRESS MONROE

frowning walls of Fortress Monroe, floated fifty men-of-war and transports. The day was clear, and the breeze brisk, and the hearts of the jolly jack-tars bounded within them as they thought of escaping from the long inactivity of a season in port. Long-boats bearing despatches rowed from ship to ship; hucksters from the shore came off in dories, dingies, and all variety of queer craft, to drive a farewell bargain with the sailors. The transport vessels were crowded with soldiers in the gay uniforms of militia commands.

(It was early in the war then, and they had not learned that a man could fight as well in dingy rags.) The "Wabash" was flag-ship, and aboard her was Admiral DuPont. When she made the signal for getting under way, all was bustle and animation on all the other vessels of the fleet, and on all sides could be heard the noise of preparation for the start. The boatswains piped away cheerily; and a steady tramp, tramp, from the deck of each ship, and the clicking of the capstan catches, told that the anchors were coming up. Soon from the black funnels of the steamers clouds of smoke began to pour, and in the rigging of the sail frigates were crowds of nimble sailors. The commands "All ready! Let fall!" rang sharply over the water from the ships. Broad sheets of snowy canvas appeared where before were but ropes and spars, and in a moment the whole squadron was under way. The steamers led off briskly, with much churning of the water by their paddle-wheels and "brazen-fins;" after them followed the magnificent sailing frigates, with sail set,—lofty masses of canvas towering toward the skies, and moving with stately grace. At the very head of all went the flag-ship, the grand old "Wabash," with the flag of Admiral DuPont floating from the fore. None of the commanders knew whither they were bound. All were to follow the flag-ship, and in event of separation to refer to sealed orders with which each was provided. For the first day all went well. The promise of fair weather given by the beautiful day of starting seemed about to be fulfilled. But on the second night, as they came near the terrible region of Cape Hatteras, the wind began to freshen, and continued increasing in fierceness until it fairly blew a gale. The night was pitchy dark, and the crews on the vessels could hardly see the craft by which they were surrounded. Great as was the danger of being cast on the treacherous shoals of Hatteras, the peril of instant destruction by collision was even more imminent. Fifty vessels, heavily freighted with human lives, were pitching and tossing within a few rods of each other, and within a few miles of a lee shore. It seemed that the destruction of a large number of the vessels was unavoidable; and the sailors may be pardoned, if, remembering the mishaps of the Burnside expedition, they conceived Hatteras to be tenanted by an evil spirit, determined to prevent the invasion of Confederate territory. To add to the danger, the Confederates had extinguished the warning light at the Cape, and the navigators of the fleet had nothing to guide them in their course. When morning came, the fleet was pretty well scattered, although

still many vessels were near enough together to be in no small danger. The transport "Winfield Scott," which carried four hundred and fifty soldiers, besides a large crew, was observed to be rolling heavily, and flying signals of distress. From the decks of the "Bienville," the nearest steamer, the officers with their glasses could see the crew of the distressed vessel working like beavers, throwing overboard every thing of weight to lighten the ship. Notwithstanding all their efforts, she was clearly water-logged, and sunk so low in the water that wave after wave broke over her decks, every now and then sweeping a man away to sure death in the raging sea. It seemed folly to attempt to launch lifeboats in such a furious sea, but the captain of the "Bienville" determined to make the attempt to save the men on the doomed "Winfield Scott." The crew was piped to quarters, and the captain asked for volunteers to go to the rescue. Man after man stepped forward, until enough had been secured to man three boats with ten men each. Carefully the boats were dropped into the sea, and man after man swung into them; then they put off and started for the sinking ship. But while these preparations were being made, the two ships had been drifting closer and closer together. Soon it was seen that a collision was inevitable. Fortunately the boats were broadside on, so that the cutting effect of a blow from the bow was avoided. They were presently so near each other that the men began jumping from the deck of the "Winfield Scot" upon that of the "Bienville." The leap, though a perilous one, was made in safety by over thirty men. Suddenly a great wave lifted the ships up and dashed them together. Three poor wretches, just about to jump, were caught between the vessels and crushed to death. A few sharp cries of agony, and all was over; and the vessels, drifting apart, let their bodies, crushed beyond recognition, fall into the water. By this time the small boats, with their determined crews on board, had succeeded in getting around to the lee side of the sinking ship, and the work of getting the soldiers and sailors over the side was begun. By the most strenuous efforts all were saved, and the "Bienville" steamed away, leaving the "Winfield Scott" to her fate.

Night came on, with the gale blowing with still greater fury. The wind shrieked through the cordage, and now and again a great wave would sweep across the decks of the crowded vessels, making the men hang on to the rigging for dear life. Soon another ship began to go to pieces. The "Governor," which had been steaming along near the "Wabash"



DU PONT'S EXPEDITION OFF CAPE HATTERAS.

since the time of leaving Hampton Roads, had become separated from her consort during the gale of the first day. On the second night, those aboard her perceived that she was showing signs of weakness, and was likely to go down with all on board unless aid could be obtained. Not a sail, however, was in sight; and every wave seemed about to overwhelm or dash to pieces the frail craft. She labored heavily in the furious sea. By and by the strain on her timbers was such that the port hog-brace broke in two places, weakening the vessel so that her fate was apparent to all. Soldiers and sailors worked away with a frantic energy born by the fear of death, and succeeded in bracing up the timbers, so as to avoid, for a time, the breaking-up. Soon after, a heavy roll of the vessel broke the smoke-stack, and it was pitched overboard. Luckily it broke some three feet above the deck, so that the fires could still be kept up. Then the steam-pipe burst; and with this accident the fate of all on board seemed sealed, for they no longer could keep the vessel's head to the waves, and the great seas came rolling over her, sweeping her decks of every thing movable. They began sending up rockets, and, after some time of anxious waiting, saw an answering signal; so that, through the remainder of that fearful night, the men on the doomed ship felt that, whatever might occur, they had friends at hand. The night was spent in toil at the pumps; and in the morning a faint cheer went up as two vessels were seen, ready to lend assistance. A signal of distress, quickly hoisted, was answered from the nearer, which proved to be the "Isaac P. Smith." The "Smith" sent off a boat and made fast a hawser to the wreck, and took her in tow; but in a few minutes the hawser parted. It became clear that the men must be taken off the sinking ship; but how to do it, was the question. By this time a second ship, the "Young Rover," had arrived to assist in the rescue. A second cable was put aboard; but this, too, parted. Hope seemed lost, when the lookout reported a third ship, the frigate "Sabine," coming to the rescue. The "Sabine" came to anchor, and sent a hawser aboard the sinking "Governor." Then the hawser was gradually taken in until the two ships lay close together, stern to stern. Spars were rigged over the stern of the frigate, and some thirty men swung over the seething waters to safety. Then the two vessels came together with a crash, and about forty men sprang from the sinking ship to the deck of the frigate. But the damage done by the collision was so great that it was deemed prudent to slack up the hawser and let the "Governor" drop astern again. Those

on board busied themselves throwing overboard all things movable, with the intention of lightening the vessel. After some hours of suspense, the work of getting the men off the sinking craft was recommenced, and boats were sent to their assistance. The sea was running too high for them to approach close to the steamer's guards, so they lay off some feet, and the soldiers jumped into them. It was a perilous leap, with the boats pitching one way, and the ship another, and a raging sea of tossing waters between; but it was made bravely by every man, and but seven or eight were lost. Soon after the last man left the "Governor," she lurched to one side and sank, carrying with her the arms and ammunition of the troops she was transporting.

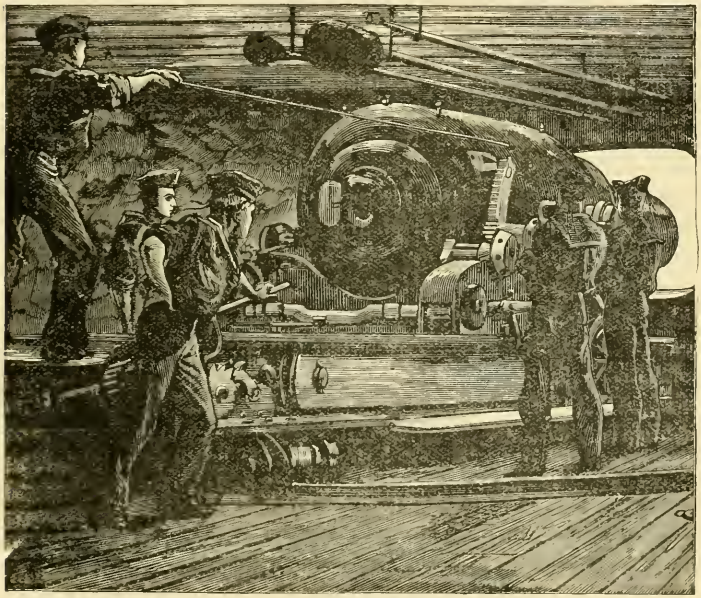
It was on Monday morning, Nov. 4, that the flag-ship "Wabash" cast anchor off Port Royal. In the offing were a few more sail headed for the same point, and during the day some twenty-five vessels of the scattered squadron came up. For the next day ships were constantly arriving, and by Tuesday night the whole squadron lay safely anchored in the broad harbor.

The defences which the Confederates had erected upon Hilton Head, a lofty bluff overlooking the harbor, were powerfully designed earthworks, poorly armed and manned. The forts were two in number, placed on a commanding elevation, and might have been made impregnable had the Confederates taken advantage of the warning sent them by their spies in Washington. Fort Walker had fourteen guns which could bear on an attacking fleet, and Fort Beauregard had twenty. When the fight began, the gunners found that most of their ammunition was either too large or too small for the guns. To support the forts in their fight, was a wretched little fleet of tugs and schooners, mounting a gun or two each, but absolutely powerless before the smallest of Du Pont's ships-of-war. Indeed, when the battle began, the Union navy gave its undivided attention to the forts, and did not even give battle to Tatnall's mosquito fleet.

Thursday morning dawned bright and mild as a morning in June. The shores of the beautiful bay were covered with woods, out of which rung the clear notes of Southern song-birds. The scene from the ships was one of the most charming imaginable. The placid bay, the luxuriant shores, the ocean showing across the low-lying ridge of white sand, the forts frowning from the steep headland, the fleet of majestic frigates mustered for the attack, and in the distance the flotilla of defenceless

transports, safely out of range, their decks and rigging crowded with fifteen thousand men — all this presented a panorama of life and beauty which few eyes have ever beheld.

Du Pont, in the majestic "Wabash," moved down the bay, and, as he came in range of Fort Walker, sent a shell shrieking from a bow-gun, as signal that the action was begun. The old frigate moved on slowly, making



THE OPENING GUN.

play with the bow-guns until abreast of the fort, when with a crash she let fly her whole broadside. On she went for a few yards, then turning in a grand circle came back, giving the other broadside to the forts as she passed. The other ships fell in behind; and round and round before the forts the fiery circle revolved, spitting out fire and ponderous iron bolts, and making the peaceful shores of the bay tremble with the deep reverberations of the cannon.

The Confederates, for their part, went into the action with the utmost coolness. They had been assured that their position was impregnable, and had been cautioned to be deliberate and determined in their defence. For a time their artillery service was admirable. But soon they found certain discouraging features about the affair. Their guns were too light to have any effect on the fleet, and their powder was of such bad quality that many of their shots fell short. Two great guns dismounted themselves, seriously injuring the men who were handling them, and the very first broadside from the fleet dismounted several more. Then it was found that the shells for the great Parrott guns were too large, and that the shells from other cannon failed to explode, owing to defective fuses. Soon the fleet found a point of fire from which it could enfilade the forts, and thereafter a perfect hail of shell and grape-shot fell in the trenches. One shell disabled eleven men. A solid shot struck a gun thought to be perfectly protected, and hurled it, with the men serving it, over the parapet. Every twenty minutes a gun was dismounted in Fort Walker, and at the end of the conflict Fort Beauregard had but nine serviceable guns.

For about four hours there was no cessation of fire on the part of the fleet. Round and round the circle the vessels steamed, giving one fort a broadside on the way up, and the other a broadside on the way down. The bombs rose from them in a majestic sweep through the air, and plunged into the fort, exploding with a roar equal to that of a cannon. One ship was commanded by Capt. Drayton, who rained shot and shell mercilessly against the forts, although one of them was in command of his own brother.

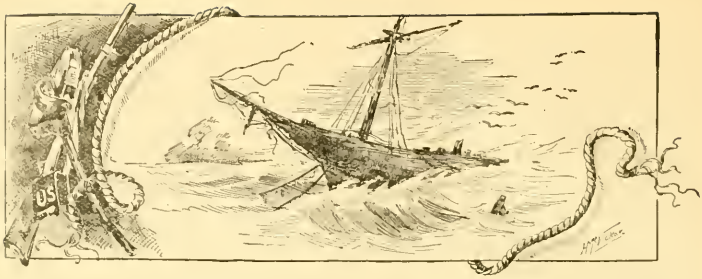
At half-past one Fort Walker was found untenable, and the work of abandoning it was begun. The evacuation was completed in great haste, many valuables were left behind, and not even the guns were spiked. Still the entire garrison escaped to mainland, although the Federals had three thousand troops who might have made them all prisoners. Not long thereafter, Fort Beauregard also yielded to fate, and the day was won by the Federals.

The landing of the troops was at once begun. Thirty large boats bore a Connecticut regiment of one thousand men to the beach. Their bright, fresh uniforms, their muskets glittering in the sun, and their regular, swaying stride as they marched up the sandy beach to the martial

strains of the regimental band, made a striking picture. They clambered over the ramparts, and in a few moments the stars and stripes floated from the staff which had but lately upheld the flag of the young Confederacy. Within the forts, all was carnage and confusion: dismounted cannon, surrounded by the dead bodies of the gunners, heaps of shells, and fragments of wood-work, were piled about the parade-ground and in the trenches. The story of the terrific bombardment was graphically told by those horrible evidences of death and destruction. And well might the scene be a horrible one. For over five hours, fifty shot a minute had been discharged at the forts, and most of them did execution. When one recollects that each shot of the great guns cost eight dollars, we get a vivid idea of the money spent in war.

Immediately upon the capture of Hilton Head, the victors began making it a great naval and military station. Great storehouses were built, wharves constructed, and vast intrenchments thrown up for the defence of the spot. The slaves, escaping from the neighboring plantations, came in droves, begging to be allowed to work; but they received but a cold welcome, for they were still looked upon as property, and the officers did not wish to be charged with enticing them away from their masters.

The news of the occupation of Hilton Head by the Northern armies caused the greatest consternation in the cities of Charleston and Savannah. From both places people fled into the interior, expecting an immediate advance of the Union troops. But the armies were set to digging, not to marching, and soon the affrighted citizens returned to their homes. Port Royal was held by the Northern forces until the end of the war, and proved of great value for the proper maintenance of the blockade. Its greatest disadvantage was its unhealthiness. Of fifteen thousand men landed there in November, five thousand were on the sick-list within a month.



## CHAPTER IX.

THE FIRST IRON-CLAD VESSELS IN HISTORY.—THE "MERRIMAC" SINKS THE "CUMBERLAND," AND DESTROYS THE "CONGRESS."—DUEL BETWEEN THE "MONITOR" AND "MERRIMAC."

IT will be remembered that when the Union forces, alarmed by the threatening attitude of the inhabitants of Norfolk and the vicinity, fled from the Norfolk navy-yard, leaving every thing there in flames, they left behind them a fine United States frigate, "Merrimac," a ship of thirty-five hundred tons, carrying forty guns. The departing Federals did their work of destruction fairly well; for the great ship was burnt to the upper edge of her copper sheathing, and sank to the bottom of the river. Three or four months after the occupation of the Norfolk navy-yard by the Confederates, Lieut. George M. Brooke, an ex-officer of the United States navy, who had resigned that he might follow the fortunes of his State, while looking at the hulk lying in the river-channel, was suddenly inspired with the thought that she might be raised and converted into a formidable vessel-of-war. He carefully matured his plans, and after due consideration proposed to the Confederate secretary of the navy, that the "Merrimac" be raised and converted into an iron-clad. His plans were approved, and orders were given that they should be carried out. The "Merrimac," as originally built, was one of the grand old types of war-vessels. Her solid oak sides rose high above the water, and were pierced by a long row of gaping port-

holes. Her masts towered high in the air; and when her great sails were set, her hull seemed crushed beneath so vast an expanse of canvas. When she had been remodelled, her entire appearance was changed. She had no longer the appearance of a ship, but seemed like a house afloat; and tradition says that the old salt on the "Cumberland," who first sighted her, reported gravely to the officer of the deck, "Quaker meetin'-house floating down the bay, sir."

When the hulk had been raised and placed in the dry-dock, the first thing done was to cut it down to the level of the berth-deck; that is, to the level of the deck below the gun-deck in the old rig. Then both ends of the ship were decked over for a distance of seventy feet; while the midship section was covered by a sort of roof, or pent-house, one hundred and seventy feet long, and extending about seven feet above the gun-deck. This roof was of pitch pine and oak, twenty-four inches thick, and covered with iron plates two inches thick. The upper part of the roof, being flat, was railed in, making a kind of promenade deck. In the great chamber formed by this roof were mounted ten guns, two of which, the bow and stern guns, were seven-inch rifles, and fairly powerful guns for those days. A strange feature of this ship, and one that was not discovered until she was launched, was that the weight of the iron-plating and the heavy guns she carried sunk her so deep in the water that the low deck forward and aft of the gun-room was always under water; so much so that the commander of another ship in the Confederate navy writes that he was obliged always to give the "Merrimac" a wide berth, lest he should run his ship on some part of the ram which lay unseen beneath the surface of the water. Powerful as this ship was, she had some serious defects. The greatest of these were her engines. They were the same that had been in her as a United States vessel, and had been condemned by a naval board as very defective. Naturally several weeks under water had not improved them; but the Confederates could not be particular about machinery just then, and the old engines were left in the new ram. It was quickly found that they could not be depended upon more than six hours at a time; and one of the ship's officers, in writing years afterwards, remarks, "A more ill-contrived or unreliable pair of engines could only have been found in some vessels of the United States navy." The second faulty feature about the "Merrimac" was that her rudder and propeller were entirely unprotected. The ram which was so much dreaded, and which

made the "Merrimac" a forerunner of a new class of war-vessels, was of cast-iron, projecting four feet, and so badly secured that it was loosened in ramming the "Cumberland," and started a bad leak in the Confederate ship.

When this formidable vessel was completed, she was christened by her new owners the "Virginia;" but the name of the old United States frigate of which she was built stuck to her, and she has ever since been known as the "Merrimac," and so we shall speak of her in this narrative. She received as commander Commodore Franklin Buchanan, an ex-Union officer of ability and daring, to whom the cadets of the naval academy at Annapolis owe the beautiful situation of the academy, and many of its admirable features; for he it was, who, in 1845, under a commission from Mr. Bancroft, Secretary of the Navy, organized and located the naval academy, and launched that institution upon its successful career. Of officers the "Merrimac" had no lack, and good ones they were; but in her crew she was lamentably deficient. Most of the crew was made up of men from the army, who knew nothing of seamanship, but who could at any rate fire a gun. A few good sailors were obtained from those who escaped to Norfolk after the destruction of the Confederate flotilla at Elizabeth City by Capt. Rowan's squadron. They had but little chance for drills and exercise on the new ship, for up to the very hour of sailing she was crowded with workmen getting her ready for the task of breaking down the Yankee blockade. When she finally set out to do battle for the South, she was a new and untried ship: not a gun had been fired, and hardly a revolution of her engines had been made. And so she started down the river on her trial trip, but intending, nevertheless, to do battle with the strongest ships of the United States navy. Accompanying her were four small Confederate gunboats, — the "Beaufort," the "Yorktown," the "Jamestown," and the "Teaser." Soon rounding out into Hampton Roads, the little squadron caught sight of the Northern fleet at anchor, and made for them. An officer on the "Congress" thus tells the story of the events that followed: —

"The 8th of March was a fine mild day, such as is common in Southern Virginia during the early spring; and every one on board our ship was enjoying the weather, and pleasing himself with the prospect of going North in a day or two at farthest, and being relieved from the monotony

of a blockade at anchor. Some of us were pacing the poop, basking in the sun, and watching the gulls, which here, as all over the world, wherever a man-of-war is anchored, manage to find out when it is dinner-time, appearing regularly when the mess-tins are being washed, and the cooks are taking the buckets of broken victuals to the head to throw overboard. Then they chatter and scream, and fight for the remnants as they drift astern, until all is consumed, when they betake themselves to fresh fields out of sight until we pipe to dinner again.

"One bell had struck some time, when the attention of the quarter-master on watch was drawn to an unusual appearance against the fringe of woods away over in the Norfolk Channel. After gazing intently some time, he approached the officer of the deck, and presenting him the glass said, 'I believe *that thing* is a-comin' down at last, sir.'

"Sure enough! There was a huge black roof, with a smokestack emerging from it, creeping down towards Sewall's Point. Three or four satellites, in the shape of small steamers and tugs, surrounded and preceded her. Owing to the intervening land, they could not be seen from Hampton Roads until some time after we had made them out; but, when they did show themselves clear of the point, there was a great stir among the shipping. But they turned up into the James River channel instead of down toward the fort, approaching our anchorage with ominous silence and deliberation.

"The officers were by this time all gathered on the poop, looking at the strange craft, and hazarding all sorts of conjectures about her; and when it was plain that she was coming to attack us, or to force the passage, we beat to quarters, the "Cumberland's" drum answering ours.

"By a little after four bells, or two o'clock, the strange monster was close enough for us to make out her plating and ports; and we tried her with a solid shot from one of our stern-guns, the projectile glancing off her forward casemate like a drop of water from a duck's back. This opened our eyes. Instantly she threw aside the screen from one of her forward ports, and answered us with grape, killing and wounding quite a number. She then passed us, receiving our broadside and giving one in return, at a distance of less than two hundred yards. Our shot had apparently no effect upon her, but the result of her broadside on our ship was simply terrible. One of her shells dismounted an eight-inch

gun, and either killed or wounded every one of the gun's crew, while the slaughter at the other guns was fearful. There were comparatively few wounded, the fragments of the huge shells she threw killing outright as a general thing. Our clean and handsome gun-deck was in an instant changed into a slaughter-pen, with lopped-off legs and arms, and bleeding, blackened bodies, scattered about by the shells; while blood and brains actually dripped from the beams. One poor fellow had his chest transfixed by a splinter of oak as thick as the wrist; but the shell-wounds were even worse. The quartermaster, who had first discovered the approach of the iron-clad, — an old man-of-war's man, named John Leroy, — was taken below with both legs off. The gallant fellow died in a few minutes, but cheered and exhorted the men to stand by the ship, almost with his last breath. The 'Merrimac' had, in the mean time, passed up stream; and our poor fellows, thinking she had had enough of it, and was for getting away, actually began to cheer. For many of them it was the last cheer they were ever to give. We soon saw what her object was; for standing up abreast of the bow of the 'Cumberland,' and putting her helm aport, she ran her ram right into that vessel. The gallant frigate kept up her splendid and deliberate, but ineffectual, fire, until she filled and sank, which she did in a very few minutes. A small freight-steamer of the quartermaster's department, and some tugs and boats from the camp-wharf, put off to rescue the survivors, who were forced to jump overboard. In spite of shot from the Confederate gunboats, one of which pierced the boiler of the freight-boat, they succeeded in saving the greater number of those who were in the water. Seeing the fate of the 'Cumberland,' which sank in very deep water, we set our topsails and jib, and slipped the chains, under a sharp fire from the gunboats, which killed and wounded many. With the help of the sails, and the tug 'Zouave,' the ship was now run on the flats which make off from Newport News Point. Here the vessel keeled over as the tide continued to fall, leaving us only two guns which could be fought, — those in the stern ports. Two large steam-frigates and a sailing-frigate, towed by tugs, had started up from Hampton Roads to our assistance. They all got aground before they had achieved half the distance; and it was fortunate that they did so, for they would probably have met the fate of the 'Cumberland,' in which case the lives of the twelve or thirteen hundred men comprising their crews would have been uselessly jeopardized.

"After the 'Merrimac' had sunk the 'Cumberland,' she came down the channel and attacked us again. Taking up a position about one hundred and fifty yards astern of us, she deliberately raked us with eighty-pounder shell; while the steamers we had so long kept up the river, and those which had come out with the iron-clad from Norfolk, all concentrated the fire of their small rifled guns upon us. At this time we lost two officers, both elderly men. One was an acting master, who was killed on the quarter-deck by a small rifle-bolt which struck him between the shoulders, and went right through him. The other was our old coast pilot, who was mortally wounded by a fragment of shell. We kept up as strong a fire as we could from our two stern-guns; but the men were repeatedly swept away from them, and at last both pieces were disabled, one having the muzzle knocked off, and the other being dismounted. Rifles and carbines were also used by some of our people to try to pick off the 'Merrimac's' crew when her ports were opened to fire, but of course the effect of the small-arms was not apparent to us.

"It is useless to attempt to describe the condition of our decks by this time. No one who has not seen it can appreciate the effect of such a fire in a confined space. Men were being killed and maimed every minute, those faring best whose duty kept them on the spar deck. Just before our stern-guns were disabled, there were repeated calls for powder from them; and, none appearing, I took a look on the berth-deck to learn the cause. After my eyes had become a little accustomed to the darkness, and the sharp smoke from burning oak, I saw that the line of cooks and wardroom servants stationed to pass full boxes had been raked by a shell, and the whole of them either killed or wounded, — a sufficient reason why there was a delay with the powder. (I may mention here that the officer who commanded our powder division was a brother of the captain of the 'Merrimac.') The shells searched the vessel everywhere. A man previously wounded was killed in the cock-pit where he had been taken for surgical aid. The deck of the cock-pit had to be kept sluiced with water from the pumps, to extinguish the fire from the shells, although dreadfully wounded men were lying on this deck, and the water was icy cold; but the shell-room hatch opened out of the cock-pit, and fire must be kept out of there at all hazards, or the whole of us would go into the air together. In the wardroom and steerage, the bulkheads were all knocked down by

the shells, and by the axe-men making way for the hose, forming a scene of perfect ruin and desolation. Clothing, books, glass, china, photographs, chairs, bedding, and tables were all mixed in one confused heap. Some time before this, our commanding officer, a fine young man, had been instantly killed by a fragment of shell which struck him in the chest. His watch, and one of his shoulder-straps (the other being gone), were afterwards sent safely to his father, a veteran naval officer.

"We had now borne this fire for nearly an hour, and there was no prospect of assistance from any quarter, while we were being slaughtered without being able to return a shot. Seeing this, the officer who had succeeded to the command of the ship, upon consultation with our former captain (who was on board as a guest), ordered our flag to be struck. It is not a pleasant thing to have to strike your flag; but I did not see then, and do not see now, what else we were to do.

"A boat now boarded us with an officer from the 'Merrimac,' who said he would take charge of the ship. He did nothing, however, but gaze about a little, and pick up a carbine and cutlass, — I presume as trophies. One of the small gunboats then came alongside, and the officer from the 'Merrimac' left. The commander of the gunboat said that we must get out of the ship at once, as he had orders to burn her. Some of our people went on board of his craft as prisoners, but not many. As her upper deck was about even with our main-deck ports, our surgeon stepped out of one, and told the commanding officer that we had some dreadfully wounded men, and that we must have time to collect them, and place them on board his vessel, and, moreover, that our ship was on fire with no possibility of saving her. The reply was, 'You must make haste: those scoundrels on shore are firing at me now.' In fact, the rifle-balls were 'pinging' about very briskly, scarring the rusty black sides of the poor old frigate; for the Twentieth Indiana Regiment had come down from the camp to the point, and opened fire on the gunboat as she lay alongside of us. Our doctor having no desire to be killed, especially by our own people, jumped back into the port, just as the steamer, finding it too hot, shoved off and left us. As soon as she did so, they all opened upon us again; although we had a white flag flying to show we were out of action, and we certainly could not be held responsible for the action of the regiment on shore. After ten or fifteen minutes, however, they all withdrew.

and went down the channel, to bestow their attentions upon the frigate 'Minnesota' which was hard aground. Fortunately the 'Merrimac' drew too much water to come near the 'Minnesota' at that stage of tide, and the small-fry were soon driven off by the latter ship's battery. Night now approaching, the whole Rebel flotilla withdrew, and proceeded up the Norfolk Channel.

"Although relieved from the pressure of actual battle, we still had the unpleasant consciousness that the fire was making progress in the vicinity of our after-magazine; and we felt as I suppose men would feel who are walking in the crater of a volcano on the verge of eruption. Fortunately for us, the 'Merrimac' and her consorts had not fired much at our upper works and spars, the principal damage being inflicted upon our lower decks. We had, therefore, the launch and first cutter, — large boats, — which, with a little stuffing of shot-holes, were fit to carry us the short distance between our ship and the shore. The yard and stay-tackles were got up, and the boats put into the water, as soon as possible; the fire gaining, and the sun going down, in the mean time.

"By successive boatloads the survivors were all landed; the launch being brought up under the bill port, and the wounded, in cots, lowered into her by a whip from the fore yard, which was braced up for the purpose. This boat was nearly filled with water on her last trip, being a good deal damaged; obliging some of the officers, who had stayed until the last, to jump overboard into the icy cold water, and lean their hands on the gunwale, so as to relieve the boat of a part of their weight. She grounded in water about waist-deep; and the soldiers from the camp waded out and assisted our men in bearing on shore, and to the log hospital of the Twentieth Indiana, those who were in cots. We had managed to get the body of our gallant young commander on shore in one of the cots, as a wounded man. The mass of the men were so 'gallied,' to use a sailor phrase, by the time the action was over, what with enduring so severe a fire without being able to respond, and also with the knowledge that an explosion of the magazine might occur at any time, that I doubt whether they could have been induced to bring off a man whom they knew to be dead. The officers repeatedly went about the decks looking for wounded men; and I firmly believe that all who were alive were brought off. Our poor old ship, deserted by all but the dead, burned till about midnight, when she blew up."

The final destruction of the "Congress" must have been a most imposing spectacle. A member of the Confederate army, who was stationed in one of the batteries near the scene of action, thus describes it: "Night had come, mild and calm, refulgent with all the beauty of Southern skies in early spring. The moon, in her second quarter, was just rising over the rippling waters; but her silvery light was soon paled by the conflagration of the 'Congress,' whose lurid glare was reflected in the river. The burning frigate four miles away seemed very much nearer. As the flames crept up the rigging, every mast, spar, and rope glittered against the dark sky in dazzling lines of fire. The hull, aground upon the shoal, was plainly visible; and upon its black surface each port-hole seemed the mouth of a fiery furnace. For hours the flames raged, with hardly a perceptible change in the wondrous picture. At irregular intervals, loaded guns and shells, exploding as the flames reached them, sent forth their deep reverberations, re-echoed over and over from every headland of the bay. The masts and rigging were still standing, apparently intact, when about two o'clock in the morning a monstrous sheet of flame rose from the vessel to an immense height. The ship was rent in twain by the tremendous flash. Blazing fragments seemed to fill the air; and, after a long interval, a deep, deafening report announced the explosion of the ship's powder-magazine. When the blinding glare had subsided, I supposed that every vestige of the vessel would have disappeared; but apparently all the force of the explosion had been upward. The rigging had vanished entirely, but the hull seemed hardly shattered; the only apparent change in it was that in two or three places, two or three of the port-holes had been blown into one great gap. It continued to burn until the brightness of its blaze was effaced by the morning sun."

In the great drama of the first day's fight at Hampton Roads, the heroic part was played by the frigate "Cumberland." On the morning of that fateful 8th of March, she was swinging idly at her moorings, her boats floating at the boom, and her men lounging about the deck, never dreaming of the impending disaster. It was wash-day, and from the lower rigging of the ship hung garments drying in the sun. About noon the lookout saw a cloud of smoke, apparently coming down the river from Norfolk, and at once notified the officer of the deck. It was surmised that it might be the new and mysterious iron-clad "Merrimac," about which many rumors were current, but few facts known. Quickly the ship was set in trim for action, and

the men sent to quarters. All the stern preparations for battle were made — the guns all shotted, the men in position, the magazines opened; shot, shell, cartridges, all in place; the powder-boys at their stations; swords, pistols, boarding-pikes, in the racks. Down in the cock-pit the surgeons spread out upon their tables the gleaming instruments, which made brave men shudder with the thought of what a few minutes would bring.

The sailors prepared for the fight gayly, never doubting for a moment that victory would be on their side. So paltry had been the resistance that the Confederates had heretofore been able to oppose to the Northern arms, by sea, that the blue-jackets felt that they had only to open a fight in order to win it. The officers were more serious. Rumors had reached them that the "Merrimac" was a most powerful vessel, destined to annihilate the navy of the North; and they looked on this first battle with the monster with many misgivings. Their fears were somewhat lessened by an article printed in the Norfolk papers, a few days previous, denouncing the "Merrimac" as a bungling bit of work, absolutely unseaworthy, and unable to stand against the powerful vessels of the North. As it turned out, however, this article was published as a *ruse* to deceive the Northern authorities.

The iron ship came steaming sullenly down the bay. The "Congress" was the first ship in range, and a puff of smoke from the "Merrimac's" bow-gun warned the crew of the frigate that danger was coming. All held their breath an instant, until, with a clatter and whiz, a storm of grape-shot rattled against her sides, and whistled through the rigging. Then came a sigh of relief that it was no worse. When the enemy was within a quarter of a mile, the "Congress" let fly her whole broadside, and the crew crowded the ports to see the result. The great iron shot rattled off the mailed sides of the monster, like hailstones from a roof. Then came the return fire; and the "Congress" was riddled with shells, and her decks ran with blood. The "Merrimac" passed sullenly on.

Now it was the turn of the "Cumberland." Her officers and crew had seen the results of the fire of the "Congress," and, with sinking hearts, felt how hopeless was their own position. There was no chance for escape, for no wind filled the sails of the frigate. She lay helpless, awaiting the attack of the iron battery that bore down upon her, without firing a shot or opening a port. At a little past two the mailed frigate had approached the "Cumberland" within grape-shot distance. Fire was opened upon

her with the heaviest guns; and officers and men watched breathlessly the course of their shot, and cried aloud with rage, or groaned in despair, as they saw them fall harmlessly from the iron ship. Still they had no thought of surrender. The fire of the "Cumberland" was received silently by the "Merrimac;" and she came straight on, her sharp prow cutting viciously through the water, and pointed straight for her victim. A second broadside, at point-blank range, had no effect on her. One solid shot was seen to strike her armored sides, and, glancing upward, fly high into the air, as a baseball glances from the bat of the batsman; then, falling, it struck the roof of the pilot-house, and fell harmlessly into the sea. In another instant the iron ram crashed into the side of the "Cumberland," cutting through oaken timbers, decks, and cabins. At the same time all the guns that could be brought to bear on the Northern frigate were discharged; and shells crashed through her timbers, and exploded upon her decks, piling splinters, guns, gun-carriages, and men in one confused wreck. Had not the engines of the ram been reversed just before striking the frigate, her headway would have carried her clear to the opposite side of the doomed ship, and the "Cumberland," in sinking, would have carried her destroyer to the bottom with her. As it was, the "Merrimac," with a powerful wrench, drew out of the wreck she had made, loosening her iron prow, and springing a serious leak in the operation. She drew off a short distance, paused to examine the work she had done, and then, as if satisfied, started to complete the destruction of the "Congress."

And well might the men of the "Merrimac" be satisfied with their hour's work. The "Cumberland" was a hopeless wreck, rapidly sinking. Her decks were bloodstained, and covered with dead men, and scattered arms and legs, torn off by the exploding shells. And yet her brave crew stuck to their guns, and fought with cool valor, and without a vestige of confusion. They had had but a few moments to prepare for action; and the long rows of clothes, drying in the rigging, told how peaceful had been their occupation before the "Merrimac" appeared upon the scene. Yet now that the storm of battle had burst, and its issue was clearly against them, these men stood to their guns, although they could feel the deck sinking beneath them. Every man was at his post; and even when the waters were pouring in on the gun-deck, the guns were loaded and fired. Indeed, the last shot was fired from a gun half buried in the waves. Then the grand old frigate set

tled down to the bottom, carrying half her crew with her, but keeping the stars and stripes still floating at the fore.

The destruction of the "Cumberland" being completed, the "Merrimac" steamed over to the "Congress." This frigate fought well and valorously, but was soon pounded into a helpless condition by the shells of the "Merrimac," as shown by the story of her officer, already quoted. When a white flag, floating at her peak, told of surrender, the "Merrimac" left her to the attention of the smaller vessels in the Confederate flotilla, and set out to find further victims. But by this time the remainder of the Federal fleet had taken alarm, and fled into a safe position under the shelter of the Federal batteries on shore. The "Minnesota" only had been unfortunate in her attempted flight, and was aground on a bar near the scene of the fight. But now only two hours of daylight remained, and the tide was low, and still on the ebb. The heavy iron frigate could not get within effective distance of the "Minnesota," her crew were weary with a day's fighting, and so she turned away and headed up the river for Norfolk.

In taking account of injuries on the ram that night, it was found that the injured numbered twenty-one; many of whom had been shot while alongside the surrendered "Congress." Not an atom of damage was done to the interior of the vessel, and her armor showed hardly a trace of the terrible test through which it had passed. But nothing outside had escaped: the muzzles of two guns had been shot off; the ram was wrenched away in withdrawing from the "Cumberland;" one anchor, the smoke-stack, steam-pipe, railings, flag-staff, boat-davitts—all were swept away as though a hugh mowing-machine had passed over the deck. But, so far as her fighting qualities were concerned, the "Merrimac" was as powerful as when she started out from Norfolk on that bright spring morning.

It can easily be understood that the news of the engagement caused the most intense excitement throughout this country, and indeed throughout the whole world. In the South, all was rejoicing over this signal success of the Confederate ship. Bells were rung, and jubilees held, in all the Southern cities. An officer of the "Merrimac," who was despatched post-haste to Richmond with reports of the engagement, was met at every station by excited crowds, who demanded that he tell the story of the fight over and over again. At last the starving people of the Confederacy saw the way clear for the sweeping away of the remorseless blockade.

In the North, the excitement was that of fear. The people of seaboard cities imagined every moment the irresistible iron ship steaming into their harbors, and mowing down their buildings with her terrible shells. The Secretary of War said, at a hastily called cabinet meeting in Washington: "The 'Merrimac' will change the whole character of the war: she will destroy every naval vessel; she will lay all the seaboard cities under contribution. Not unlikely we may have a shell or cannon-ball from one of her guns, in the White House, before we leave this room."

In this excited state, wild with joy, or harassed with fear, the whole country went to sleep that March night, little dreaming that the morrow would change the whole face of the naval situation, and that even then a little untried vessel was steaming, unheralded, toward Hampton Roads, there to meet the dreaded "Merrimac," and save the remnants of the Federal fleet. Then no one knew of the "Monitor;" but twenty-four hours later her name, and that of her inventor Ericsson, were household words in all the States of the Union and the Confederacy.

Capt. John Ericsson was a Swedish engineer, residing in this country, who had won a name for himself by inventing the screw-propeller as a means of propulsion for steamships. He and a Connecticut capitalist, C. S. Bushnell by name, had ever since the opening of the war been trying to induce the Government to build some iron-clads after a pattern designed by Ericsson, and which afterwards became known as the "monitor" pattern. Their labors at Washington met with little success. After a long explanation of the plan before the wise authorities of the Naval Board, Capt. Ericsson was calmly dismissed with the remark, "It resembles nothing in the heavens above, or the earth beneath, or the waters under the earth. You can take it home, and worship it without violating any Commandment." Finally, however, leave was obtained to build a monitor for the Government, provided the builders would take all financial risks in case it proved a failure. So, with this grudging permission, the work of building the war-ship that was destined to save the Federal navy was begun. Work was prosecuted night and day, and in one hundred days the vessel was ready for launching. Great was the discussion over her. Distinguished engineers predicted that she would never float; and many attended the launch expecting to see the vessel plunge from the ways to the bottom of the river, like a turtle from a log. So general was this opinion, that boats were

in readiness to rescue her passengers if she went down. But Capt. Ericsson's plans were well laid. The great vessel glided with a graceful dip into the river, and floated at her cables buoyantly. She was a strange-looking craft. All that was to be seen of her above water was a low deck about a foot above the water, bearing in the centre a large round iron turret pierced with two great port-holes. Besides the turret, the smooth surface of the deck was broken by two other elevations, — a small iron pilot-house forward, made of iron plates about ten inches thick, and with iron gratings in front; aft of the turret was a low smoke-stack. Beneath the water-line this vessel had some strange features. The upper part of her hull, forming the deck, projected beyond her hull proper about four feet on every side. This projection was known as the "overhang," and was designed as a protection against rams. It was made of white oak and iron, and was impenetrable by any cannon of that day; although now, when steel rifled cannon are built that will send a ball through twenty inches of wrought iron, the original "Monitor" would be a very weak vessel.

The turret in this little vessel, which held the two guns that she mounted, was so arranged as to revolve on a central pivot, thus enabling the gunners to keep their guns continually pointed at the enemy, whatever might be the position of the vessel. When the time for the first battle actually arrived, it was found that the turret would not revolve properly; but in later ships of the same class this trouble was avoided.

It was at two o'clock on the morning after the day on which the "Merrimac" had wrought such havoc among the ships of the North, that this queer-looking little vessel steamed into Hampton Roads. As the gray dawn began to break, she passed under the quarter of the "Minnesota," and cast anchor. The tars on the great frigate looked curiously at the strange craft, and wondered if that insignificant "cheese-box on a raft" was going to do battle with the dreaded "Merrimac." Small hopes had they that their noble frigate would be saved by any such pygmy war-ship.

In the mean time, the men of the "Merrimac" up at Norfolk were working energetically to prepare her for the destruction of the rest of the Union ships. Her ram was tightened in its place, her steering apparatus overhauled, and some changes made, and her rickety engine was patched up. At daybreak all was bustle as the ram prepared to move down on the

Union fleet. But just as she was about to start, her officers saw the queer craft lying by the "Minnesota," which they at once knew to be the Ericsson "Monitor." Her appearance was not very terrible; but, nevertheless, the Confederates felt that she had appeared at a most inopportune moment for them. Still they raised anchor, and started down the bay to meet their mysterious enemy.

It was Sunday morning, and the sun rose in a cloudless blue sky. A light breeze stirred the surface of the water, and played lazily with the long streaming pennants of the men-of-war. The batteries on both sides of the bay were crowded with men waiting for the great naval battle of the day. Up at Norfolk a gay holiday party was embarking on steam-tugs, to accompany the Confederate ship and witness the total destruction of the Union fleet. No thought of defeat ever entered the minds of the proud believers in the new iron-clad of the Confederacy.

At the first sign of life on board the "Merrimac," the "Monitor" began her preparations for the battle. In fifteen minutes she was in battle trim. The iron hatches were closed, the dead-light covers put on, and obstructions removed from the main deck, so as to present a smooth surface only twenty-four inches above the water, unbroken, save by the turret and pilot-house. In the pilot-house was Lieut. Worden, who was to command the "Monitor" in this her first battle.

Leisurely the "Merrimac" came down the bay, followed by her attendant tugs; and, as she came within range, she opened fire on the "Minnesota," which was still aground. The frigate responded with a mighty broadside, which, however, rattled off the mailed sides of the ram like so many peas. Clearly, every thing depended upon the "Monitor;" and that little craft steamed boldly out from behind the "Minnesota," and sent two huge iron balls, weighing one hundred and seventy pounds each, against the side of the "Merrimac." The shot produced no effect beyond showing the men of the "Merrimac" that they had met a foeman worthy of their steel. The "Merrimac" slowed up her engines, as though to survey the strange antagonist thus braving her power. The "Monitor" soon came up, and a cautious fight began; each vessel sailing round the other, advancing, backing, making quick dashes here and there, like two pugilists sparring for an opening. The two shots of the "Monitor" would come banging one after the other against the "Merrimac's" armor, like the "one, two" of a skilled boxer. In this

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ENGAGEMENT OF THE "MONITOR" AND "MERRIMAC," MARCH 9, 1862

dancing battle the "Monitor" had an enormous advantage, on account of her size, greater speed, and the way in which she answered her helm. The "Merrimac" was like a huge hawk being chased and baited by a little sparrow. Her heavy broadsides found nothing to hit in the almost submerged hull of the "Monitor." When a ball struck the turret, it glanced off, unless striking fair in the centre, when it fell in fragments, doing no greater damage than to dent the iron plates, and sometimes knocking down the men at the guns inside. The first manœuvre tried by the "Merrimac" was to run down her little antagonist; and she did strike her with a force that dented the iron overhang of the "Monitor," and dashed the men in the "Merrimac" to the deck, with blood streaming from their nostrils. For a moment it seemed as though the "Monitor" must go under; but gradually the terrible ram glanced off, and the little vessel, righting, sent again her terrible two shots at her enemy. In the action of the day before, shot and shell had beaten against the sides of the ram so rapidly that one could not count the concussions. Now it was a series of tremendous blows about a minute apart; and, if the men had not been working away at their guns, they could have heard the oak timbers splintering behind the iron plating. At a critical moment in the fight the "Merrimac" ran aground; and the "Monitor" steamed around her several times, seeking for weak places in which to plant a shot. Once Worden dashed at his adversary's screw, hoping to disable it, but missed by perhaps two feet. Two shots from the "Monitor" struck the muzzles of two cannon protruding from the port-holes of the "Merrimac," and broke them off, throwing huge splinters of iron among the gunners inside. And so the battle continued until about noon: gun answered gun with thunderous reports, that echoed back from the batteries on shore in rolling reverberations. The pleasure-seeking tugs from Norfolk had scuttled back again out of the way of the great cannon-balls that were skipping along the water in every direction. Neither of the combatants had received any serious injury. On board the "Monitor" the only hurt was received by a gunner, who was leaning against the iron wall of the turret just as a shot struck outside; he was carried below, disabled. But at last one lucky shot fired from one of the disabled guns of the "Merrimac" ended this gigantic contest; sending each contestant to her moorings, without an actual victory for either side. This shot struck full and fair against the gratings of the pilot-house, through which Lieut. Worden was looking as he directed the

course of his ship. The concussion knocked him senseless. Flakes of iron and powder were driven into his eyes and face, blinding him completely for the time. He fell back from the wheel, and the "Monitor" was left for a moment without her guiding spirit. All was confusion; but in a few moments Worden recovered, and gave the order to sheer off. The "Monitor" then drew away, while Worden was moved to the cabin, and the second officer sent to his station in the turret. Lying on a sofa in the cabin, his eyes bandaged, and the horror of life-long blindness upon him, Worden asked faintly, "Have I saved the 'Minnesota'?" — "Yes," answered the surgeon. "Then," said he, "I die happy."

While these scenes were transpiring on the "Monitor," the "Merrimac" lay quietly awaiting her return. The Confederate officers say that she waited an hour, and then, concluding that the "Monitor" had abandoned the fight, withdrew to Norfolk. The Northern officers and historians say that the "Merrimac" was in full retreat when the decisive shot was fired. It is hard to decide, from such conflicting statements, to which side the victory belonged. Certain it is, that not a man on the "Merrimac" was injured, and that all damages she sustained in the fight were remedied before sunrise the next day. Later, as we shall see, she challenged the Union fleet to a new battle, without response. But with all these facts in view, it must be borne in mind that the purpose of the "Merrimac," that bright March Sunday, was to destroy the frigate "Minnesota:" in that purpose she was foiled by the "Monitor," and to that extent at least the "Monitor" was the victor.

Lieut. Worden, after the fight, went directly to Washington. President Lincoln was at a cabinet meeting when he heard of Worden's arrival in the city, and hastily rising said, "Gentlemen, I must go to *that fellow*." Worden was lying on a sofa, his head swathed in bandages, when the President entered. "Mr. President," said he, "you do me great honor by this visit." — "Sir," replied Mr. Lincoln, while the tears ran down his cheeks, "I am the one who is honored in this interview."

Among his crew Worden was very much beloved. The following letter, sent him while on a bed of pain, is all the more touching for the rude form in which their affection for their commander is expressed: —

## TO CAPTAIN WORDEN.

HAMPTON ROADS, April 24, 1862.
UNITED STATES MONITOR.

TO OUR DEAR AND HONORED CAPTAIN.

*Dear Sir*, — These few lines is from your own crew of the Monitor, with their kindest Love to you their Honored Captain, hoping to God that they will have the pleasure of welcoming you back to us again soon, for we are all ready able and willing to meet Death or any thing else, only give us back our Captain again. Dear Captain, we have got your Pilot-house fixed and all ready for you when you get well again; and we all sincerely hope that soon we will have the pleasure of welcoming you back to it. . . . We are waiting very patiently to engage our Antagonist if we could only get a chance to do so. The last time she came out we all thought we would have the Pleasure of sinking her. But we all got disappointed, for we did not fire one shot, and the Norfolk papers says we are cowards in the Monitor — and all we want is a chance to show them where it lies with you for our Captain We can teach them who is cowards. But there is a great deal that we would like to write to you but we think you will soon be with us again yourself. But we all join in with our kindest love to you, hoping that God will restore you to us again and hoping that your sufferings is at an end now, and we are all so glad to hear that your eyesight will be spaired to you again. We would wish to write more to you if we have your kind Permission to do so but at present we all conclude by tendering to you our kindest Love and affection, to our Dear and Honored Captain.

We remain untill Death your Affectionate Crew

THE MONITOR BOYS.

The "Merrimac," after being repaired and altered to some extent, sailed down the bay on the 11th of April, for the purpose, as her officers said, of meeting the "Monitor" again. She steamed into the Roads, and exchanged a few shots with the Union batteries at the rip-raps; but the "Monitor," and other Union vessels, remained below Fortress Monroe, in Chesapeake Bay, out of the reach of the Confederate vessel. Again, a few days later, the "Merrimac" went to Hampton Roads, and tried to lure the "Monitor" to battle; but again the challenge passed unanswered. It is probable that the Federal naval authorities did not care to imperil the only vessel that stood between them and destruction, out of mere bravado. Had the "Monitor" come out, an attempt would have been

made to carry her by boarding. The crew of the "Merrimac" were prepared for the attack; and four gunboats accompanying her were crowded with men, divided into squads, each with its specified duty. Some were to try and wedge the turret, some were to cover the pilot-house and all the openings with tarpaulin, others were to try to throw shells and gunpowder down the smoke-stack. But all these preparations proved useless, as the "Monitor" still remained quietly at her anchorage. On May 8 a third trip was made by the "Merrimac." When she came down the bay, she found the Union fleet, including the "Monitor," hard at work shelling the Confederate batteries at Sewall's Point. As she came towards them, they ceased their cannonade, and retired again to the shelter of Fortress Monroe. The "Merrimac" steamed up and down the Roads for some hours; and finally Commodore Tatnall, in deep disgust, gave the order, "Mr. Jones, fire a gun to windward, and take the ship back to her buoy."

Back to Norfolk she went, never again to leave that harbor. On the 9th of May the officers of the "Merrimac" noticed that the Confederate flag was no longer floating over the shore-batteries. A reconnoissance proved that the land forces had abandoned Norfolk, and it was necessary to get the ship away before the Union troops arrived and hemmed her in. Her pilots declared that if the ship was lightened they could take her up the James River; and accordingly all hands threw overboard ballast and trappings, until she was lightened three feet. Then the pilots claimed that with the prevalent wind they could not handle her. It was now useless to try to run her through the Union fleet, for the lightening process had exposed three feet of her unarmed hull to the fire of the enemy. It was accordingly determined that she should be destroyed. She was run ashore on Craney Island, and trains of powder laid all over her, and fired. Every gun was loaded, and the doors of the magazine were left open. Her crew then started on the march for the interior. It was just in the gray of the morning that a rumbling of the earth was felt, followed by a shock that made all stagger. A column of smoke and flame shot into the air; huge cannon were hurled high above the tree-tops, discharging in mid-air. One shot fell in the woods some distance ahead of the marching crew, and all knew that it marked the end of the mighty "Merrimac."

## CHAPTER X.

THE NAVY IN THE INLAND WATERS.—THE MISSISSIPPI SQUADRON.—SWEEPING THE TENNESSEE RIVER.

WE will now leave for a time the blue-water sailors, whose battles, triumphs, and defeats we have been considering, and look at the work done by the tars of both North and South on the great waterways which cut up the central portion of the United States, known as the Valley of the Mississippi. It was in this section that the navy of the North did some of its most effective work against the Confederacy, and it was there that the sailor boys of the South did many deeds of the most desperate valor. There is much of romance about service on the blue ocean which is not to be found in routine duty along the yellow muddy streams that flowed through the territory claimed by King Cotton. The high, tapering masts, the yards squared and gracefully proportioned, the rigging taut, and with each rope in its place, of an ocean-frigate, are not seen in the squat, box-like gunboats that dashed by the batteries at Vicksburg, or hurled shot and shell at each other in the affair at Memphis. But Farragut, stanch old sea-dog as he was, did much of his grandest fighting on the turbid waters of the Mississippi; and the work of the great fleet at Port Royal was fully equalled by Porter's mortar-boats below New Orleans.

Let us follow the fortunes of the Union fleet on their cruises about the great rivers of the interior, and first discover what the work was that they set out to perform.

The rivers making up the Mississippi system flow for the greater part of their length through the States that had joined the new Confederacy. The northern Confederate battle-line was along the south bank of the Ohio River, and there they had erected batteries that controlled the passage of that river. South of the mouth of the Ohio, every river was lined with Confederate batteries, and bore on its placid bosom fleets of Confederate gunboats. At Columbus on the Mississippi, not far south of the mouth of the Ohio, were strong batteries over which floated the stars and bars of the Confederacy. Farther down was Island Number 10, bearing one of the most powerful fortifications the world has ever seen. Then came Fort Pillow, guarding the city of Memphis; then at Vicksburg frowned earthworks, bastions, and escarpments that rivalled Gibraltar for impregnability. Lower down were fortifications at Grand Gulf, Port Hudson, and Baton Rouge. Fort Henry guarded the Tennessee River and Fort Donelson the Cumberland, and both of these rivers were very important as waterways for the transportation of supplies to the Union armies marching into Tennessee. It was absolutely necessary that all these fortifications should be swept away, and the rivers opened for navigation down to the Gulf of Mexico. It was necessary that the work should be done from above; for the forts below New Orleans were thought to be impassible, and Farragut's passage of them late in the war made all the world ring with his name.

It became evident, very early in the war, that no great progress could be made in the task of crushing the powerful insurrection until telling blows had been struck at the Confederate control of the inland waterways. When the attention of the war department was turned in that direction, they found but little to encourage them in the prospect. Along the thousands of miles of the banks of the Mississippi and its tributaries, there was not one gun mounted belonging to the United States, not one earthwork over which floated the starry flag of the Union. The Confederate positions on this great chain of waterways were, as we have seen, of great strength. To attack them, the armies of the North must first fight their way through whole States populated by enemies. Obviously,

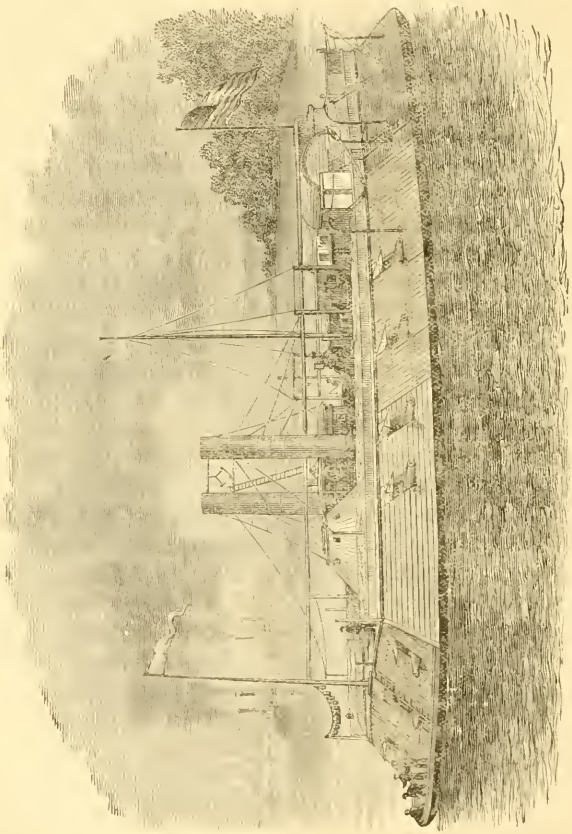
the war department alone could not complete so gigantic a task, and the services of the navy were called into requisition. So energetically did the navy department prosecute its task, that, by the end of the war, over one hundred Federal war-vessels floated on those streams, on which, three years before, no craft dared sail under the American flag. It was a strange navy in looks, but in actions it showed itself worthy of the service in which it was enlisted.

Many of the steamers built for the river marine were wooden gunboats, hastily remodelled from the hulks of old craft. They were seldom plated with iron, and their machinery was feebly protected by coal bunkers, while their oaken sides were barely thick enough to stop a musket-ball. But the true iron-clad war-vessel made its appearance on the rivers even before it was to be seen in the ocean squadrons.

It was as early in the war as July, 1861, that the quartermaster-general advertised for bids for the construction of iron-clad gunboats for service on the Mississippi and tributary rivers. The contract was given to James B. Eads, an engineer, who during the war performed much valuable service for the United States Government, and who in later years has made himself a world-wide fame by the construction of the jetties at the mouth of the Mississippi River, by which the bar at the mouth of the great stream is swept away by the mighty rush of the pent-up waters. Mr. Eads was instructed to build seven iron-clad gunboats with all possible expedition. They were to be plated two and a half inches thick, and, though of six hundred tons burden, were not to draw more than six feet of water. They were to carry thirteen heavy guns each.

These river-gunboats, like the little "Monitor," had none of the grace and grandeur of the old style of sailing-frigate, in which Paul Jones fought so well for his country. The tapering masts of the mighty frigate, the spidery cordage by which the blue-jackets climbed to loosen the snowy sheets of canvas — these gave way in the gunboat to a single slender flagstaff for signalling, and two towering smoke-stacks anchored to the deck by heavy iron cables, and belching forth the black smoke from roaring fires of pitch-pine or soft coal. Instead of the gracefully curved black sides, with two rows of ports, from which peeped the muzzles of great cannon, the gunboat's sides above water sloped like the roof of a house, and huge iron shutters hid the cannon from view. Inside, all was dark

and stuffy, making battle-lanterns necessary even in daylight fights. The broad white gundeck, scrubbed to a gleaming white by hollystone and limejuice, on which the salt-water sailors gathered for their mess or drill,



A RIVER-GUNBOAT

was replaced by a cramped room, with the roof hardly high enough to let the jolly tars skylark beneath without banging their skulls against some projecting beam. Truly it may be said, that, if the great civil war

made naval architecture more powerful, it also robbed the war-vessels of all their beauty.

It is hard to appreciate now the immense difficulty experienced in getting those first seven river-gunboats built by the appointed time. The war had just begun, and a people accustomed to peace had not yet found out that those not actually at the seat of war could continue their usual course of life unmolested. Rolling-mills, machine-shops, foundries, saw-mills, and shipyards were all idle. Working-men were enlisting, or going to the Far West, away from the storm of war that was expected to sweep up the Mississippi Valley. The timber for the ships was still standing in the forests. The engines that were to drive the vessels against the enemy were yet to be built. Capt. Eads's contract called for the completion of the seven vessels in sixty-five days, and he went at his work with a will. His success showed that not all the great services done for a nation in time of war come from the army or navy. Within two weeks four thousand men were at work getting the gunboats ready. Some were in Michigan felling timber, some in the foundries and machine-shops of Pittsburg, and others in the shipyards at St. Louis, where the hulls of the vessels were on the stocks. Day and night, week-days and Sundays, the work went on; and in forty-five days the first vessel was completed, and christened the "St. Louis." The others followed within the appointed time. Before the autumn of 1861, the river navy of the United States numbered nearly a score of vessels, while nearly forty mortar-boats were in process of construction. Of this flotilla, Capt. A. H. Foote, an able naval officer, was put in command, and directed to co-operate with the land forces in all movements.

The first service to which the gunboats were assigned was mainly reconnoitring expeditions before the front of the advancing Union armies. They were stationed at the junction of the Ohio and Mississippi Rivers; and the country about Cairo was occupied by a large body of Union troops under the command of Gen. Grant, then a young officer little known. The opening fight of the river campaign was little more than a skirmish; but it proved the superiority of the gunboats over a land-force for the purpose of opening the river. One bright day in September, the "Lexington" and "Conestoga" were ordered to proceed down the river eight or ten miles, and dislodge a Confederate battery that had taken a position on

Lucas Point. The two vessels steamed cautiously down the stream, without encountering any resistance until within easy range of the battery, when the Confederates opened with sixteen cannon. The shot and shells fell all about the vessels; but neither was hit, showing that the Confederate gunners were not yet used to firing at a moving mark. But the fire of the gunboats was admirably directed; the shells falling among the Confederates, dismounting the guns, and driving the gunners from their pieces. It was too hot a spot for any man to hold; and a cavalry corps quickly attached their horses to the guns, and drew them down the river to the shelter of the Confederate works at Columbus. Then the defeated party sent up the gunboat "Yankee" to attack the two victors, but this vessel was quickly disposed of. She opened fire at long range, but without success. The first shot from the "Conestoga" struck the water a few feet from the "Yankee," and, ricochetting, plunged into her hull. The discomfited vessel immediately put about, and started down stream, followed by a heavy fire from the two Northern ships. Just as she was passing out of range, an eight-inch shell from the "Lexington" struck her starboard wheel-house, and shattered the paddle-wheel, totally disabling the vessel, so that she drifted sidelong to her anchorage like a wounded duck.

On the return of the Northern vessels up the river, they first encountered the form of warfare that proved the most perilous for the sailors of the river navy. Confederate sharp-shooters lined the banks, perched in the trees, or hidden in the long, marshy grass; and any unwary tar who showed his head above the bulwarks was made a target for several long rifles in the hands of practised shots.

The next active service performed by the gunboats was at the battle of Belmont, directly opposite the Confederate batteries at Columbus. The Union troops, landing in force, had driven the Confederates from their camp, and were engaged in securing the spoils, when the gunners at Columbus, seeing that the camp was in the hands of the enemy, turned their heavy guns on it, and soon drove out the Yankees. The Confederates had rallied in the woods, and now came pouring out, in the hope of cutting off the Union retreat to the boats. On all sides the dark gray columns could be seen marching out of the woods, and pouring down upon the retreating army of the North. Batteries were wheeling into position, and staff-officers in travelling carriages were dashing to and fro carrying orders.

It seemed a black day for the three or four thousand Unionists who were making for their transports with all possible speed. But now was the time for the gunboats to take a hand in the fight. Three of them dropped into position, and began a deadly fire upon the Confederate line. The huge shells ploughed their way through whole platoons of men. Bursting, they would mow down soldiers like saplings before a cyclone. One shell exploded directly beneath an officers' carriage, and threw horses, carriage, and men high in the air. The Confederates hastened to get their field-batteries into position, and replied to the deadly fire from the ships, but to no avail. Their light artillery was of no effect upon the plated sides of the gunboats, and they saw their cannon dismounted or shattered by the solid shot from the big guns of the iron-clads. They fought bravely, but the conflict was unequal. It was sheer madness for any body of men, with muskets and light artillery, to stand against the fire of the gunboats. The gunboats saved the day. The retreat of the Union army was unchecked; and, covered by the war-vessels, the transports returned safely to Cairo.

On the Tennessee River, near the northern boundary of Tennessee, the Confederates had thrown up certain earthworks to which they gave the name of Fort Henry. This, with Fort Donelson, situated near by, formed the principal Confederate strongholds in Tennessee. Gen. Grant determined to strike a heavy blow by capturing these two forts; and Commodore Foote, with his seven gunboats, was ordered to co-operate with the land-forces in the expedition. They started from Cairo on Feb. 2, 1862. When a few miles below the fort, the troops were landed and ordered to proceed up the back country, and attack the fort in the rear, while Foote should engage it from the river with his gunboats. While the troops were being landed, Gen. Grant boarded the "Essex," and went up the river to get a view of the fort they were about to attack. Had it been completed in accordance with the plans of the engineers, it would have been most formidable. Time, however, had been short, and the earthworks were far from being completed. There were many points on the river or on the opposite bank, from which a well-directed artillery fire would make them untenable. The Confederate commander, Gen. Tilghman, fully appreciated this fact, and, at the approach of the gunboats, had sent four-fifths of his garrison across the country to Fort Donelson, being determined to sacrifice as few men as possible in the defence of

so untenable a position. While Grant and Foote were examining the works through their field-glasses, the sullen boom of a great gun came over the waters, and a heavy rifled shot crashed through the stateroom of Capt. Porter on the "Essex." The two commanders concluded that the Confederate gunners, though new to war, understood something of artillery practice; and the "Essex" was accordingly taken down the river, out of range.

The following night was chill and rainy; and the Union forces, bivouacking on shore, grumbled loudly over their discomforts. The morning dawned dark; but soon the sun came out, and the preparations for battle were begun. The troops were first despatched on their cross-country march; and, as they departed, Commodore Foote remarked coolly, that his gunboats would have reduced the fort before the land forces came within five miles of it. This proved to be the fact.

The gunboats formed in line of battle, and advanced up the river. The four iron-clads led, steaming abreast. About a mile in the rear, came the three wooden vessels. The fort was soon in range; but both parties seemed anxious for a determined conflict, and no shot was fired on either side as the gunboats came sullenly on. How different must have been the feelings of the two combatants! Tilghman, with his handful of men, hardly able to work eight of the eleven guns mounted in his fort, and knowing that his defeat was a mere question of time; Foote, with his iron-clads and supporting gunboats, his seventy-two guns, and his knowledge that six thousand men were marching upon the rear of the Confederate works. On the one side, all was absolute certainty of defeat; on the other, calm confidence of victory.

When the flotilla was within a third of a mile of the fort, the fire began. The gunners on the ships could see the muzzles of the Confederate guns, the piles of shells and cannon-balls, and the men at their work. The firing on both sides was deliberate and deadly. The Confederates were new to the work, but they proved themselves good marksmen. The first shot was fired from the shore, and, missing the "Essex" by but a few feet, plumped into the water, so near the next ship in line as to throw water over her decks. Within five minutes, the "Essex" and the "Cincinnati" were both hit. The armor of the gunboats proved no match for the shots of the Confederates, and in many cases it was penetrated. In some instances, shells, entering through the port-holes, did deadly damage.

On the shore, the shells from the gunboats were doing terrible work. Banks of solid earth, eight feet thick, were blown away by the terrible explosions. One, bursting in front of a ten-inch columbiad, filled that powerful gun with mud almost to the muzzle, disabling it for the remainder of the fight. A shot from the "Essex" struck the muzzle of a great gun, ripped off a splinter of iron three feet long, and crushed a gunner to pulp. The gun was just about to be fired, and burst, killing or wounding every man of the crew. At the same moment a shell crashed through the side of the "Essex," killing men right and left: took off the head of a sailor standing by Capt. Porter, wounded the captain, and plunged into the boiler. In an instant the ship was filled with scalding steam. The men in the pilot-house were suffocated. Twenty men and officers were killed or scalded. The ship was disabled, and drifted out of the fight. While withdrawing, she received two more shots, making twenty in all that had fallen to her share in this hot engagement. But by this time the fort was very thoroughly knocked to pieces. The big twenty-four pounder was dismounted, and five of its crew killed. Gun after gun was keeled over, and man after man carried bleeding to the bomb-proofs, until Gen. Tilghman himself dropped coat and sword, and pulled away at a gun by the side of his soldiers. Receiving ten shots while they could only fire one, this little band held out for two long hours; and only when the crew of the last remaining piece threw themselves exhausted on the ground, did the flag come fluttering down. Gen. Tilghman went to the fleet and surrendered the fort to Commodore Foote, and Grant's army came up more than an hour after the battle was over. To the navy belongs the honor of taking Fort Henry, while to Gen. Tilghman and his plucky soldiers belongs the honor of making one of the most desperate fights under the most unfavorable circumstances recorded in the history of the civil war.

The fall of Fort Henry opened the way for the Union advance to Fort Donelson, and marked the first step of the United States Government toward regaining control of the Mississippi. It broke the northern battle-line of the Confederacy, and never again was that line re-established.

With Fort Henry fallen, and Gen. Tilghman and his little garrison prisoners on the Union gunboats, Grant's soldier-boys and Foote's blue-jackets began active preparations for continuing the conquest of Tennessee by the capture of Fort Donelson. No time was lost. The very night that

the stars and stripes were first hoisted over the bastion of Fort Henry saw three of Foote's gunboats steaming up the river on a reconnoitring expedition. Before them the Confederates fled in every direction. After several hours' advance, they came to a heavy railroad-bridge spanning the river, and effectually preventing further progress. Beyond the bridge were several Confederate steamers, black with men, and heavily laden with valuable military stores. With all steam on, they were dashing up stream, and rapidly leaving the gunboats behind. Enraged at seeing such valuable prizes slipping through their hands, the Union gunners sent shell after shell shrieking after the flying boats, but to no avail. A party was hastily landed for the purpose of swinging the draw of the bridge, but found the machinery broken, and the ways on which the bridge swung twisted and bent out of shape. An hour's hard work with axes and crowbars, and the draw was swung far enough to let pass the "Conestoga" and the "Lexington." They dashed forward like greyhounds slipped from the leash; and, after several hours' hard steaming, a smoke over the tree-tops told that the Confederate fugitives were not far ahead. Soon a bend in the river was passed; and there, within easy range, were two of the flying steamers. A commotion was visible on board, and boat after boat was seen to put off, and make for the shore; on reaching which the crews immediately plunged into the woods, and were out of sight before the gunboats could get within range. Soon light blue smoke curling from the windows of the steamers told that they had been fired; and as the last boats left each vessel, she ceased her onward course, and drifted, abandoned and helpless, down the stream. When within about a thousand yards of the two gunboats, the deserted steamers blew up with such force, that, even at that great distance, the glass was shattered in the "Conestoga," and her woodwork seriously damaged.

The two gunboats leisurely continued their excursion into the heart of the enemy's country. Little or no danger was to be feared. At that time, the Confederates had not learned to plant torpedoes in their rivers, to blow the enemy's vessels into fragments. There was no artillery stationed in that section to check their progress, and the only resistance found was an occasional rifle-shot from some concealed sharp-shooter in the bushes on the shore. On the 7th of February the gunboats reached Cerro Gordo, Tenn.; and here they made a valuable capture. The Confederates

had been at work for weeks converting the steamer "Eastport" into an iron-clad ram; and, as the Union vessels came up, they found her almost completed, and absolutely without defence. Besides the new vessel, there was in the shipyard a large quantity of lumber and ship-timber, which was of the greatest value to the builders of the river navy. The two gunboats promptly captured all this property; and waiting until the "Tyler," which had been detained at the drawbridge, came up, they left her in charge, and continued their raid into the enemy's country. Little incident occurred until they reached the head of navigation of the river, where they found all the Confederate vessels which had been flying before them for two days. These were burned, and the two gunboats started back down the river, stopping for the "Eastport" on the way. The captured vessel was afterwards completed, and served the cause of the Union for two years, when she was blown up on the Red River.

When the raiding expedition reached Cairo, the officers found Foote getting his squadron together for the attack on Fort Donelson. This fortification was one strongly relied upon by the Confederates for the maintenance of their northern line of battle. It was on the bank of the Cumberland River, nearly opposite the site of Fort Henry on the Tennessee. A garrison of at least fifteen thousand men manned the works, and were commanded by no less than three generals; and the fact that there were *three* generals in command had much to do with the fall of the fort. Its strength was rather on its river-front. Here the river winds about between abrupt hillsides, and on the front of one of these hills stood Fort Donelson. The water-batteries were made up of heavy guns, so mounted as to command the river for miles. On the landward side were heavy earthworks, abatis, and sharp pointed *chevaux-de-frise*.

Against this fortification marched Grant with an army of eighteen thousand men, and Foote with his flotilla of gunboats. The Sunday before the start, Foote, who was a descendant of the old Puritans, and ever as ready to pray as to fight, attended church in a little meeting-house at Cairo. The clergyman did not appear on time; and the congregation waited, until many, growing weary, were leaving the church. Then the bluff old sailor rose in his pew, and, marching to the pulpit, delivered a stirring sermon, offering thanks for the victories of the Union arms, and imploring divine aid in the coming struggles. The next day he was

on his way to hurl shot and shell at the men in the trenches of Fort Donelson.

While the capture of Fort Henry was a feather in the caps of the sailor-boys of the North, Fort Donelson must be credited to the valor of the soldiers. Against the heavy wall of the water-batteries, the guns of Foote's little flotilla pounded away in vain, while the heavy shells from the Confederate cannon did dreadful work on the thinly armored gunboats. It was on the 13th of April that the assault was opened by the "Carondelet." This vessel had reached the scene of action before the rest of the flotilla, and by order of the army commander tested the strength of the fort by a day's cannonade. She stationed herself about a mile from the batteries, at a spot where she would be somewhat protected by a jutting point, and began a deliberate cannonade with her bow-guns. One hundred and thirty shots went whizzing from her batteries against the front of the Confederate batteries, without doing any serious damage. Then came an iron ball weighing one hundred and twenty pounds, fired from a heavy gun, which burst through one of her portholes, and scattered men bleeding and mangled in every direction over the gundeck. She withdrew a short distance for repairs, but soon returned, and continued the fire the remainder of the day. When evening fell, she had sent one hundred and eighty shells at the fort, with the result of killing one man. This was not promising.

The next day the attack was taken up by all the gunboats. The distance chosen this time was four hundred yards, and the fight was kept up most stubbornly. It was St. Valentine's Day; and as the swarthy sailors, stripped to the waist, begrimed with powder, and stained with blood, rammed huge iron balls down the muzzles of the guns, they said with grim pleasantry, "There's a valentine for the gray-coats." And right speedily did the gray-coats return the gift. Shot and shell from the batteries came in volleys against the sides of the gunboats. In the fort the condition of affairs was not serious. The shells chiefly fell in the soft earth of the hilltop above, and embedded themselves harmlessly in the mud. One of the gunners after the fight said: "We were more bothered by flying mud than any thing else. A shell bursting up there would throw out great clots of clay, that blocked up the touch-holes of our guns, spoiled the priming of our shells, and plastered up the faces of our men.

Of course, now and then a bit of shell would knock some poor fellow over; but, though we were all green hands at war, we expected to see lots more blood and carnage than the Yankee gunboats dealt out to us."

The gunboats, however, had put themselves in a hot place. Twenty heavy guns on the hillside high above were hurling solid shot down on the little fleet. The sailors stuck to their work well; and though the vessels were in a fair way of being riddled, they succeeded in driving the enemy from his lower battery. But the upper battery was impregnable; and the gunners there, having got the correct range, were shooting with unpleasant precision. Two of the vessels were disabled by being struck in the steering-chains. On the "Carondelet" a piece burst, hurling its crew bleeding on the deck. No vessel escaped with less than twenty wounds, while the flag-ship was hit fifty-nine times. Commodore Foote was wounded in the foot by a heavy splinter; a wound from which he never fully recovered, and which for some years debarred him from service afloat.

That afternoon's bombardment showed clearly that Fort Donelson could never be taken by the navy. When Foote ordered his gunboats to cease firing and drop back out of position, the Confederates swarmed back into the lower battery that they had abandoned; and, after a few hours' work, the fort was as strong as before the fight. It was the first case in the history of the war in which the navy had failed to reduce the fortifications against which it had been ordered. The Hatteras forts, the works at Roanoke Island and at Hilton Head, Fort Henry — all had fallen before the cannon of the Union sailors; and Foote may well be pardoned if he yielded to Gen. Grant with great reluctance the honor of reducing Fort Donelson. For two days Grant's army invested the fort, and kept up a constant cannonade; then the defenders, despairing of escape, and seeing no use of further prolonging the defence, surrendered.

The capture of Fort Donelson was an important success for the Union arms. In addition to the large number of prisoners, and the great quantity of munitions of war captured, the destruction of the fort left the Cumberland River open to the passage of the Union gunboats, and the Confederate battle-line was moved back yet another point. But now was to come a most heroic test of the power of the river-navy and the army of the North.

Some sixty miles below Cairo, the rushing, tawny current of the mighty

Mississippi turns suddenly northward, sweeping back, apparently, toward its source, in a great bend eight or ten miles long. At the point where the swift current sweeps around the bend, is a low-lying island, about a mile long and half a mile wide. This is known as Island No. 10; and at the opening of the war, it was supposed to hold the key to the navigation of the Mississippi River. Here the Confederates had thrown up powerful earthworks, the heavy guns in which effectually commanded the river, both up and down stream. The works were protected against a land bombardment by the fact that the only tenable bit of land, New Madrid, was held by Confederate troops. The shores of the Mississippi about Island No. 10 present the dreariest appearance imaginable. The Missouri shore is low and swampy. In 1811 an earthquake-shock rent the land asunder. Great tracts were sunk beneath the water-level of the river. Trees were thrown down, and lie rotting in the black and miasmatic water. Other portions of the land were thrown up, rugged, and covered with rank vegetation, making hills that serve only as places of refuge for water-moccasons and other noxious reptiles. Around this dreary waste of mud and water, the river rushes in an abrupt bend, making a peninsula ten miles long and three wide. Below this peninsula is New Madrid, a little village in the least settled part of Missouri; here the Confederates had established an army-post, and thrown up strong intrenchments. It was not, however, upon the intrenchments that they relied, but rather upon the impassable morasses by which they were surrounded on every side. In New Madrid were posted five or six thousand men; a small fleet of Confederate gunboats lay in the stream off the village; and higher up the river was Island No. 10, with its frowning bastions and rows of heavy siege-guns, prepared to beat back all advances of the Union troops.

In planning for the attack of this stronghold, the first difficulty found by Commodore Foote lay in the fact that his gunboats were above the batteries. In fighting down stream in that manner, the ships must be kept at long range: for, should a shot from the enemy injure the engine or boiler of a gunboat, the vessel is doomed; for the rapid current will rush her down under the enemy's guns, and her capture is certain. But the peril of running the batteries so as to carry on the fight from below seemed too great to be ventured upon; and besides, even with Island No. 10 passed, there would still be the batteries of New Madrid to cope with, and

the gunboats of the Confederates to take the ships in the rear. So it was determined that the navy should begin a bombardment of the Confederate works, while the army under Gen. Pope should attend to New Madrid. Accordingly, on March 15, the whiz of a rifled shell from the flag-ship "Benton" announced to the Confederates that the North wanted the Mississippi opened for travel.

In this engagement use was made for the first time of a new style of vessel known as mortar-boats, which in later conflicts on the rivers did great service. These boats were simple floats, heavily built, and calculated to stand the most terrible shocks. On the float was raised a sort of sheet-iron fort or wall, about five feet high; and in the centre stood one thirteen-inch mortar. The mortar is the earliest of all forms of cannon, and was in use in Europe in 1435. Its name is derived from its resemblance to an ordinary druggist's mortar. The great thirteen-inch mortars used in the civil war weighed seventeen thousand pounds, and threw a shell thirteen inches in diameter. These shells were so heavy that it took two men to bring them up to the cannon's mouth. In the river-service, the mortar-boats were moored to the bank, and a derrick was set up in such a position that the shells could be hoisted up, and let fall into the yawning iron pot below. Foote had fourteen of these monsters pounding away at the Confederates, and the roar was deafening.

A correspondent of the "Chicago Times," who was with the fleet at the time of the bombardment, thus describes the manner of using these immense cannon: "The operation of firing the mortars, which was conducted when we were near by, is rather stunning. The charge is from fifteen to twenty-two pounds. The shell weighs two hundred and thirty pounds. For a familiar illustration, it is about the size of a large soup-plate. So your readers may imagine, when they sit down to dinner, the emotions they would experience if they happened to see a ball of iron of those dimensions coming toward them at the rate of a thousand miles a minute. The boat is moored alongside the shore, so as to withstand the shock firmly, and the men go ashore when the mortar is fired. A pull of the string does the work, and the whole vicinity is shaken with the concussion. The report is deafening, and the most enthusiastic person gets enough of it with two or three discharges. There is no sound from the shell at this point of observation, and no indication to mark the course it is taking; but in a few

seconds the attentive observer with a good glass will see the cloud of smoke that follows its explosion, and then the report comes back with a dull boom. If it has done execution, the enemy may be seen carrying off their killed and wounded."

And so from mortar-boats and gunboats, the iron hail was poured upon the little island, but without effect. When Foote with his flotilla first opened fire, he thought that the Confederate works would be swept away in a day or two. His ordnance was the heaviest ever seen on the Mississippi, and in number his guns were enough to have battered down a mountain. But his days grew to weeks, and still the flag of the Confederacy floated above Island No. 10. The men on the mortar-boats were giving way under the tremendous shocks of the explosions. Many were rendered deaf for days at a time. The jar of the explosions brought to the surface of the river hundreds of old logs and roots that had lain rotting in the soft ooze of the bottom. When all the mortars were engaged, the surface of the river was covered with foam and bubbles; and men by the thousand went about with their ears stuffed with tow, to protect them against the sound. Yet, after weeks of such firing, Gen. Beauregard telegraphed to Richmond, that the Yankees had "thrown three thousand shells, and burned fifty tons of gunpowder," without injuring his batteries in the least.

The Confederates remained passive in their trenches. They had no guns that would carry far enough to reply to Foote's mortars, and they did not wish to waste powder. It was galling to stand fire without replying; but, fortunately for them, the fire was not very deadly, and but few were injured. When, however, a shell did fall within the works, it made work enough to repair damages, as by its explosion a hole as large as a small house would be torn in the ground. But for every one that fell within the batteries, twenty fell outside. Some strange freaks are recorded of the shells. One fell on a cannon, around which eight or ten men were lying. The gun-carriage was blown to pieces, but not a man was hurt. Another fell full on the head of a man who was walking about distributing rations, and not so much as a button from his uniform was ever found.

But while the navy was thus playing at bowls with great guns, the army had marched through the interior, captured New Madrid, and obtained a foothold below Island No. 10. Thus the Confederates were surrounded; and the very impassability of the land, that had been an

advantage to them, now told against them, for it cut off all hope of re-enforcements. Gen. Pope's position was such that he could not get at the island, nor secure a commanding position, without aid from the navy. He begged Foote to try to run the batteries; but the commodore replied, that the risk was greater than the prospective gain, and continued his cannonade. Then a new idea was broached. By cutting a canal through the bayous, swamps, and woods of the peninsula, the lighter vessels could be taken by the fort without risk, and Foote would then dare the dangers of a dash by in the gunboats. Every one said that such a canal was impossible; but the men of the North were given to doing impossible things in those days, and while Foote's mortar-boats continued their thunder, fifteen hundred men were set to work cutting a way through the noisome swamps. A channel forty feet wide must be made. First gangs of men with axes and saws, working in three feet of water, went ahead, cutting down the rank vegetation. As fast as a little space was cleared, a small steamer went in, and with dredge and steam-capstan hauled out the obstructions. In some places the surveyed channel was so filled with drift-wood, fallen trees, and tangled roots, that the labor of a thousand men for a day seemed to make no impression. When the canal was pretty well blocked out, the levee was cut; and the rush of the waters from the great river undermined trees, and piled up new obstacles for the steamers to tow away. Amid the foulest vapors the men worked, and more than a thousand were sent to the hospital with chills and fever, and rheumatism. The most venomous snakes lurked in the dark recesses of the swamp; on cypress-stumps or floating logs the deadly water-moccason lay stretched out, ready to bite without warning. Wherever there was a bit of dry ground, the workers were sure to hear the rattle of the rattlesnake. Sometimes whole nests of these reptiles would be uncovered.

The work was continued day and night. When the failing daylight ceased to make its way through the thickly intwined branches of trees and climbing vines, great torches would be lighted, and by their fitful glare the soldiers and sailors worked on in the water and mud. The light glared from the furnaces of the steamers, lighting up the half-naked forms of the stokers. Now and then some dry vine or tree would catch a spark from a torch, and in an instant would be transformed into a pillar of fire. After eight days of work the canal was finished, and was found to be of

sufficient depth for the passage of the transports. And now Commodore Foote saw that the time had come when he must attempt to run his gunboats past the forts, be the danger what it might.

On April 1, Foote ordered a reconnoissance of the batteries, and this order evoked one of the most daring deeds in the history of the war. The night was pitchy dark, and heavy clouds were driven across the sky by a strong, damp wind, that told of a coming storm. In five boats a party of fifty sailors and fifty soldiers put off from the fleet, prepared to go down and beard the Confederate lion in his den. Hardly had they started on their perilous expedition, when the rain began falling in sheets, and now and again flashes of lightning made the dark shores visible for an instant, then the black night hid every thing again from view. It was midnight, and the fierceness of the wind added to the terror of the moment. On the banks, the great forest-trees were bending and groaning before the blast, while the broad surface of the river was lashed into foaming billows. Under cover of the darkness the little band passed rapidly down the river; past the shore-batteries and past the Confederate picket-boats, they sped unseen. When they were within a few feet of the shore, a flash of lightning revealed them for just an instant to the sentries. Then all was black, save for the quick flashes of the sentries' guns as they gave the alarm and fell back. The Federals landed rapidly, and drove the confused Confederates from the battery. Then began the work of spiking the guns. Every fifth man carried a number of rat-tail files, which were to be driven into the vents of the cannon, and then broken off. While the raiders were engaged in this work, the Confederates rallied, and soon drove back the blue-jackets to their boats, with a slight loss in killed and captured. How many guns they had disabled, it is hard to say. In the excitement and glory of successful adventure, the reports were much exaggerated. Histories of that date depict the men as calmly spiking *every* gun, and then retiring deliberately. One writer claims that only one gun was spiked. However, testimony from Confederates on duty in the batteries goes to show that four guns were totally disabled. But the true value of the adventure to the Union forces was the dash and valor it disclosed, and the encouragement the people received from its success.

The next day after this successful exploit, a gunboat, the "Carondelet," was made ready to try the dash past the batteries of Island No. 10.

Again the weather was favorable to the plans of the Federals, for the night was as dark and wild as the one before. The day had been clear, and the night opened with so bright a moon that for a time it was thought that the project would have to be abandoned; but toward ten o'clock a heavy thunder-storm came up, and soon the black sky, the wildly waving tree-tops, and the sheets of rain scudding across the river, gave promise of a suitable night.

All day the sailors on the "Carondelet" had been working busily, getting their vessel in trim for the trip. Heavy planks were laid along the deck, to ward off plunging shot. Chain cables were coiled about all weak points, cord-wood was piled around the boilers, and the pilot-house was wrapped round and about with heavy hawsers. On the side toward the battery was tied a large barge, piled high with cotton-bales. When the time for starting drew nigh, all lights were extinguished. The guns were run in, and the ports closed. The sailors, heavily armed, were sent to their stations. Muskets, revolvers, and sabres were in the racks. Down in the boiler-room the stokers were throwing coal upon the roaring fires; and in the engine-room the engineer stood with his hand on the throttle, waiting for the signal to get under way.

Towards eleven o'clock the time seemed propitious for starting. The storm was at its height, and the roll of the thunder would drown the beat of the steamer's paddles. The word was given; and the "Carondelet," with her two protecting barges, passed out of sight of the flotilla, and down towards the cannon of the enemy. For the first half-mile all went well. The vessel sped along silently and unseen. The men on the gun-deck, unable to see about, sat breathlessly, expecting that at any moment a cannon-ball might come crashing through the side into their midst. Suddenly from the towering smoke-stacks, burst out sheets of flame five feet high, caused by the burning soot inside, and lighting up the river all about. Quickly extinguished, they quickly broke out again; and now from the camp of the alarmed enemy came the roll of the drum, and the ringing notes of the bugle sounding the alarm. A gunboat was bearing down on the works, and the Confederates sprang to their guns with a will. The men on the "Carondelet" knew what to expect, and soon it came. Five signal rockets rushed up into the sky, and in an instant thereafter came the roar of a great gun from one of the batteries. Then all joined in, and the din became

terrible. With volley after volley the Confederates hurled cannon-balls, shells, musket, and even pistol-bullets at the flying ship, that could only be seen an instant at a time by the fitful flashes of the lightning. On the "Carondelet" all was still as death. The men knew the deadly peril they were in, and realized how impossible it was for them to make any fight. In the black night, threading the crooked and ever-changing channel of the Mississippi River, it was impossible to go more than half-speed. In the bow men were stationed casting the lead, and calling out the soundings to the brave old Capt. Hoel, who stood on the upper deck unprotected from the storm of bullets, and repeated the soundings to Capt. Walker. So through the darkness, through the storm of shot and shell, the "Carondelet" kept on her way. Past the land-batteries, past the rows of cannon on the island, and past the formidable floating battery, she swept uninjured. Heavy and continuous as was the fire of the Confederates, it was mainly without aim. The hay-barge was hit three times, but not a scar was on the gunboat when she stopped before the water-front of New Madrid after twenty minutes' run through that dreadful fire.

And now the roar of the great guns had died away, and the men on the vessels of the flotilla up the river were all anxiety to know what had been the fate of their gallant comrades on the "Carondelet." All the time the battle raged, the decks of the ships at anchor were crowded with sailors looking eagerly down the river, and trying to make out by the blinding flashes of the cannon the dark form of a gunboat speeding by the hostile camp. Now all is silent; the roar of battle is over, the flash of gunpowder no more lights up the night. But what has become of the gallant men who braved that tempest of steel and iron? Are they floating down the troubled waters beneath the wreck of their vessel? It was a moment of suspense. After a few minutes' silence, there comes through the strangely quiet air the deep boom of a heavy gun. It had been agreed, that, if the "Carondelet" made the passage of the batteries safely, she should fire six heavy guns. The old tars on the decks say softly to themselves, "One." Then comes another, and a third, and still more, until suddenly a ringing cheer goes up from the flotilla, louder than the thunder itself. Men dance for joy; grizzled tars fall into each other's arms, sing, shout, cry. An answering salute goes booming back, rockets scud up into the clouds; and Commodore Foote, with a heart too full for talking, goes down into his cabin to be alone.

That night's work by the "Carondelet" terminated Confederate domain on Island No. 10. The next night another gunboat came down, and the two set to work carrying the troops across the river, protecting artillerymen engaged in erecting batteries, and generally completing the investment of the island. In two days every loop-hole of escape for the Confederates is closed, — gunboats above and below them, batteries peering down from every bluff, and regiments of infantry, all prepared to move upon the works. They made one or two ineffectual but plucky attempts to ward off capture. One private soldier swam ashore, skulked past the Union pickets, and made his way to one of the Union mortar-boats. He succeeded in getting to the mortar, and successfully spiked it, thus terminating its usefulness. A second Confederate succeeded in reaching the deck of the mortar-boat, but while making his way across the deck tripped and fell. The rat-tail file he was carrying was driven into his side, making a wound from which he died in two hours. A third man, reckless of life, set out in a canoe to blow up a gunboat. He carried with him a fifty-pound keg of gunpowder, which he proposed to strap on the rudder-post of the vessel. He succeeded in getting under the stern of the vessel; but the gleam of his lighted match alarmed the sentry, who fired, hitting him in the shoulder. The Confederate went overboard, and managed to get ashore; while his keg of powder, with the fuse lighted, went drifting down stream. Soon it exploded, throwing up an immense column of water, and showing that it would have sent the stoutest vessel to the bottom had it been properly placed.

But such struggles as these could not long avert the impending disaster. The Confederates were hemmed in on every side. It was true that they had a strong position, and could make a desperate resistance; but they were separated from their friends, and their final downfall was but a question of time. Appreciating this fact, they surrendered two days after the "Carondelet" had passed the batteries; and Foote made his second step (this time one of sixty miles) toward the conquest of the Mississippi.

To-day nothing remains of the once extensive island, save a small sand-bank in the middle of the great river. The rushing current of the Father of Waters has done its work, and Island No. 10 is now a mere tradition.

## CHAPTER XI.

FAMOUS CONFEDERATE PRIVATEERS, — THE "ALABAMA," THE "SHENANDOAH," THE "NASHVILLE."

LET us now desert, for a time, the progress of the Union forces down the Mississippi River, and turn our attention toward the true home of the sailors, — the blue waters of the ocean. We have heard much, from many sources, of the exploits of the Confederate commerce-destroyers, privateers, or, as the Union authorities and the historians of the war period loved to call them, the "Rebel pirates." In the course of this narrative we have already dealt with the career of the "Sumter," one of the earliest of these vessels. A glance at the career of the most famous of all the Confederate cruisers, the "Alabama," will be interesting.

This vessel was built in England, ostensibly as a merchant-vessel, although her heavy decks and sides, and her small hatchways, might have warned the English officials that she was intended for purposes of war. Before she was finished, however, the customs-house people began to suspect her character; and goaded on by the frequent complaints of the United States minister, that a war-vessel was being built for the Confederates, they determined to seize her. But customs-house officials do things slowly; and, while they were getting ready for the seizure, Capt. Semmes, who had

taken command of the new ship, duped them, and got his vessel safely out of English waters. Private detectives and long-shore customs officers had been visiting the ship daily on visits of examination; but, by the aid of champagne and jolly good-fellowship, their inexperienced eyes were easily blinded to the manifest preparations for a war-like cruise. But finally came a retired naval officer who was not to be humbugged. A sailor on board thus tells the story of his visit: "He was evidently a naval officer, alert and resolute, and soon silenced the officer's explanations. He looked at the hatchways, shot-racks, and magazines; and, surveying the hammock-hooks on the berth-deck, said, 'You'll have a large crew for a merchant-steamer.' We had taken on board some heavy oak plank, that lay on the main deck; the officer remarked that they were for anchor-stocks, and was shortly answered, 'Wouldn't make bad gun-platforms, sir,' which, indeed, was just what they were intended for. With a 'Good-morning, sir,' our visitor mounted the side and was gone." This visit alarmed the Confederates; and immediate preparations were made to run the ship, which still went by the name of the "No. 290," out of the British waters the next day. To disarm suspicion, a large party of ladies and gentlemen were invited aboard; and the ship started down the Mersey, ostensibly on her trial trip, with the sounds of music and popping corks ringing from her decks. But peaceful and merry as the start seemed, it was the beginning of a voyage that was destined to bring ruin to hundreds of American merchants, and leave many a good United States vessel a smoking ruin on the breast of the ocean. When she was a short distance down the river, two tugs were seen putting off from the shore; and in a moment the astonished guests were requested to leave the ship, and betake themselves homeward in the tugs. It is unnecessary to follow the voyage of the "No. 290" to Nassau, and detail the way in which cannon, ammunition, and naval stores were sent out from Portsmouth in a second vessel, and transferred to her just outside of Nassau. It is enough to say that on a bright, clear Sunday morning, in the latter part of August, 1862, Capt. Rafael Semmes, late of the Confederate cruiser "Sumter," a gentleman of middle height, wearing a uniform of gray and gold, his dark mustache waxed to such sharp points that one would think him a Frenchman rather than a Southerner, stood on the quarter-deck of the "No. 290," with his crew mustered before him, reading out his commission

from Jefferson Davis, as commander of the Confederate States' steam-sloop "Alabama." As he read, an old master's-mate, standing at the peak-halyards, begins pulling at the ropes. The British ensign, carried through the ship's anonymous days, comes fluttering down, and in its place runs up the white naval ensign of the Confederacy, with the starry Southern cross in the red field of the corner. Then the reading is ended. Boom! goes the starboard forecastle-gun. The band bursts forth with the stirring notes of Dixie; and the sailors, after three ringing cheers, crowd forward to wait for further developments. Soon the sailors are summoned aft again, and Capt. Semmes addresses them. He tells them that, as the "Alabama" is to be a ship-of-war, they are released from their shipping contracts, but are invited to ship under the new plan. He briefly details the purpose of the cruise. The "Alabama" is to be a bird of passage, flitting from port to port, and hovering about the highways of travel, to lie in wait for the merchant-vessels of the North. Armed vessels she will avoid as much as possible, confining her warfare to the helpless merchant-men. It is hardly a glorious programme, but it seems to bear the promise of prize-money; and before the day is over Capt. Semmes has shipped a crew of eighty men, and with these the "Alabama" begins her cruise. The remainder of the sailors are sent ashore, and the "Alabama" starts off under sail, in search of her first capture.

Let us look for a moment at this vessel, perhaps the most famous of all cruisers. She was a fast screw-steamer, of a little more than a thousand tons' burden. Her screw was so arranged that it could be hoisted out of the water; and, as the saving of coal was a matter of necessity, the "Alabama" did most of her cruising under sail. Her hull was of wood, with no iron plating, and her battery consisted of but eight light guns; two facts which made it necessary that she should avoid any conflicts with the powerful ships of the United States navy. Her lines were beautifully fine; and, as she sped swiftly through the water, Capt. Semmes felt that his vessel could escape the Northern cruisers as easily as she could overhaul the lumbering merchantmen. The crew was a turbulent one, picked up in the streets of Liverpool, and made up of men of all nationalities. Terrific rows would arise in the forecastle, and differences between the sailors were often settled by square stand-up fights. The petty officers seldom interfered; one old boatswain remarking, when he heard the noise

of blows in the forecastle, "Blast them, let 'em slug one another's heads off; it will keep 'em out of mischief." And it generally did, for the combatants were usually fast friends the next day.

As soon as the new ship was cleaned up, and put in order, drill began. The men were all green; and hard, steady work at the guns, and with the cutlasses, was necessary to fit them for service. The decks resounded with "right," "left," "head protect," "right overcut." The men were slow in learning; but the officers were Southerners, devoted to their cause, and were tireless in getting the crew into shape.

After several days of cruising and drill, a vessel was sighted which was unmistakably American. One of the sailors tells the story of her capture graphically. "On the morning of the 5th of September the cry of 'ship ahoy!' from the masthead brought all hands on deck. Sure enough, about two miles to the leeward of us was a fine barque, at once pronounced a 'spouter' (whaler), and an American. In order to save coal, — of which very essential article we had about three hundred tons aboard, — we never used our screw unless absolutely necessary. We were on the starboard tack, and with the fresh breeze soon came alongside. We had the American flag set, and the chase showed the stars and stripes. A gun was fired; and, as we came within hail, we gave the order, 'Back your mainsail; I'll send a boat on board of you.'

"'Cutter away,' and the boat came down from the davits, and we pulled for our first prize. It soon became a vain thing, and tiresome; but this our first essay was a novelty, and we made the stretches buckle with our impatience to get aboard. The bowman hooked on to the chains, and we went up the side like cats. When we got aft, the captain asked in a dazed sort of manner, 'Why — why — what does this mean?' The master, Fullam, replied, 'You are prize to the Confederate steamer "Alabama," Capt. Semmes commanding. I'll trouble you for your papers.' Now, this man had been four years out, and had no doubt heard of the trouble at home; but he couldn't realize this, and he stared, and said, 'Confederate government — Alabama — why, that's a State,' and then was sternly told to get his papers. We were ordered to put the crew in irons, and they too, seemed utterly dumbfounded; and one poor fellow said to me, 'Must I lose all my clothes?' I answered, 'Yes,' but advised him to put on all he could, and if he had any money to slip it in his boot. 'Money! I h'aint seen a dollar for three years; but I'm obliged to ye all the same.'"

Then, after searching the vessel for valuables, the captives were taken back to the "Alabama," while one boat's-crew remained behind to fire the vessel.

"She was loaded with oil," writes sailor Haywood; "and, when it caught, a high column of dense black smoke poured out of the hatchways, and spread in vast involutions to the leeward. Soon the red forked flames began to climb her masts, and her spars glowed with light; with a crash her mainmast fell, carrying the foremast with it, and sending a shower of sparks high in the air; her stout sides seemed to burst open; and what was a stately ship was now a blackened hulk, the rising sea breaking in white-caps over it, and at last, with a surge and wallow, sinking out of sight." Alone, by one of the lee-ports, the ruined American captain stood, looking sadly upon the end of all his long four years' labor. For this he had borne the icy hardships of the Arctic seas. The long, dreary four years of separation from wife and home had been lightened by the thought, that by a prosperous voyage he might bring home enough money to stay always in the little shingled cottage in the narrow street of some New England fishing-village; but now all that was over. When he should arrive home he would be penniless, with nothing but the clothes on his back, and all because of a war of the very existence of which he knew nothing. It was hard to bear, but war brings nothing but affliction.

After this capture, the "Alabama" had a lively season for several weeks, capturing often two or three vessels a day. Generally they met with no resistance; but occasionally the blood of some old sea-dog would boil, and he would do the best in his power to injure his captors. A story of one such incident was thus told by one of the "Alabama's" crew:—

"When we ran around in search of whalers, we came upon a Yankee skipper who didn't know what surrender meant. We were just well to the west of the stormy cape, when one morning after breakfast we raised a whaler. He was headed up the coast, and about noon we overhauled him. He paid no attention to the first shot, and it was only when the second one hulled him that he came into the wind. It was then seen that he had fifteen or sixteen men aboard, and that all were armed with muskets, and meant to defend the ship. The lieutenant was sent off with his boat; but no sooner was he within fair musket-range, than the whaler opened on him, killing one man, and wounding two, at the first volley. The officer pushed ahead, and

demanded a surrender; but he got another volley, and the reply that the whaler 'would go to the bottom before he would surrender to a Rebel!'

"The boat was recalled, and our gunners were instructed to hull the whaler with solid shot. We approached him within rifle-range, and opened fire. Every one of the balls plumped through his side at and above the water-line, and he answered with his muskets, severely wounding two men. He was repeatedly hailed to surrender, but in reply he encouraged his men to maintain their fire. We soon had the sea pouring into his starboard side through a dozen holes; and when it was seen that he would soon go down, we ceased firing, and again demanded his surrender. I can remember just how he looked as he sprang upon the rail, — tall, gaunt, hair flying, and eyes blazing, — and shouted in reply, —

"'The 'Ben Scott' don't surrender! Come and take us — if you can.'

"Five minutes later his craft settled down, bow first. We lowered the boats to save his crew, and, strangely enough, not a man was lost. When we brought them aboard, the Yankee skipper walked up to Semmes, bareheaded, barefooted, and coatless, and said, —

"'If I'd only have had one old cannon aboard, we'd have licked ye out of yer butes! Here we are, and what are ye going to do with us?'

"He was voted a jolly good fellow, and the crew were better treated than any other ever forced aboard. In order to give them their liberty, the very next capture we made was bonded, and they were put aboard to sail for home."

But now the decks of the "Alabama" were getting rather uncomfortably crowded with prisoners, and it became necessary to put into some port where they could be landed. Accordingly the ship was headed for Martinique, and soon lay anchored in the harbor of that place, where she began coaling. While she lay there, a Yankee schooner put into the port, and was about to drop anchor near the dangerous cruiser, when some one gave the skipper a hint; and, with a startled "b'gosh," he got his sails up, and scudded out to sea. The "Alabama" lay in port some days. The first set of the sailors who received permission to go ashore proceeded to get drunk, and raised so great a disturbance, that thereafter they were obliged to look on the tropical prospect from the deck of the vessel. The next day a United States war-vessel was seen standing into the harbor, and Capt. Semmes immediately began to make preparations to fight her.

But as she came nearer she proved to be the "San Jacinto," a vessel mounting fourteen heavy guns, and altogether too powerful for the "Alabama." So thinking discretion the better part of valor, the Confederate ship remained safe in the neutral harbor. The "San Jacinto" quietly remained outside, thinking that at last the fox was caught. But that same night, with all lights extinguished, and running under full steam, the "Alabama" slipped right under the broadside of her enemy, getting clean away, so quietly that the "San Jacinto" remained for four days guarding the empty trap, while the "Alabama" was off again on another voyage of destruction, and the tuneful souls in the forecastle were roaring out the chorus, —

"Oh, our jolly privateer
Has left old England's shore!
Lord, send us lots of prizes,
But no Yankee man-of-war."

Soon after leaving Martinique, the "Alabama" made a capture which embarrassed the captain not a little by its size. It was Sunday (which Capt. Semmes calls in his journal "the 'Alabama's' lucky day"), when a bit of smoke was seen far off on the horizon, foretelling the approach of a steamer. Now was the time for a big haul: and the "Alabama's" canvas was furled, and her steam-gear put in running order. The two vessels approached each other rapidly; and soon the stranger came near enough for those on the "Alabama" to make out her huge walking-beam, see-sawing up and down amidships. The bright colors of ladies' dresses were visible; and some stacks of muskets, and groups of blue-uniformed men, forward, told of the presence of troops. The "Alabama" came up swiftly, her men at the guns, and the United States flag flying from the peak, — a rather dishonorable ruse habitually practised by Capt. Semmes. In a moment the stranger showed the stars and stripes, and then the "Alabama" ran up the white ensign of the Confederacy, and fired a blank cartridge. But the stranger had no thought of surrendering, and crowded on all steam and fled. The "Alabama" was no match for her in speed, so a more peremptory summons was sent in the shape of a shell that cut the steamer's foremast in two. This hint was sufficient. The huge paddles ceased revolving, and a boat's-crew from the "Alabama" went aboard to take possession. The prize proved to be the mail steamer "Ariel." with

five hundred passengers, besides a hundred and forty marines and a number of army and navy officers. Now Capt. Semmes had an elephant on his hands, and what to do with that immense number of people he could not imagine. Clearly the steamer could not be burned like other captures. For two days Capt. Semmes kept the prize near him, debating what was to be done, and then released her; exacting from all the military and naval officers their paroles that they would not take up arms against the Confederacy.

After this exploit the "Alabama" went into port for a few days, and then headed into the Gulf of Mexico. Here she steamed about, capturing and burning a few United States merchantmen, until on the 11th of January she found herself off the port of Galveston, where a strong blockading fleet was stationed. And here she fought her first battle.

About four o'clock of a clear afternoon, the lookout in the cross trees of the United States sloop-of-war "Hatteras," stationed off the port of Galveston, hailed the officer of the deck, and reported a steamer standing up and down outside. The stranger was watched closely through marine glasses, and finally decided to be a blockade-runner trying to make the port; and the "Hatteras" immediately set out in pursuit. This was just what Capt. Semmes desired. He knew that the ships stationed off Galveston were not heavily armed, and he felt sure that if he could entice one away from the rest of the fleet he would be able to send her to the bottom. Accordingly he steamed away slowly, letting the "Hatteras" gain on him, but at the same time drawing her out of the reach of any aid from her consorts. When about twenty miles away from the fleet, the "Alabama" slowed down and finally stopped altogether, waiting for the "Hatteras" to come up. The latter vessel came within two hundred yards, and hailed, "What ship's that?"—"Her Majesty's ship 'Petrel,'" answered Semmes, pursuing the course of deception that brings so much discredit on his otherwise dashing career. The captain of the "Hatteras" answered that he would send a boat aboard; but, before the boat touched the water, a second hail announced, "We are the Confederate ship 'Alabama,'" and in an instant a heavy broadside crashed into the "Hatteras." Every one of the shots took effect; and one big fellow from the one hundred and five pounder rifle peeled off six feet of iron plating from the side of the "Hatteras," and lodged in the hold. Dazed by this unexpected fire, but plucky as ever, the

blue-jackets sprang to their guns and returned the fire. The two ships were so close together that a good shot with a revolver could have picked off his man every time, and the sailors hurled taunts at each other between the volleys. Not a shot missed the "Hatteras:" in five minutes she was riddled with holes, and on fire, and a minute or two later the engineer came up coolly and reported, "Engine's disabled, sir;" followed quickly by the carpenter, who remarked, "Ship's making water fast; can't float more than ten minutes, sir." There was nothing for it but surrender, and the flag came down amid frantic yells from the "Alabama" sailors. Semmes got out his boats with wonderful rapidity, and picked up all the men on the "Hatteras;" and the defeated vessel sank in ten minutes One of the strange things about this battle was the small number of men injured. Nothing but shells were fired, and they searched every part of the vessels; yet when the fight was over the "Alabama" had but one man wounded, while the "Hatteras" had two men killed and three wounded. The shells played some strange pranks in their course. One ripped up a long furrow in the deck of the "Alabama," and knocked two men high in the air without disabling them. Another struck a gun full in the mouth, tore off one side of it, and shoved it back ten feet, without injuring any of the crew. One man who was knocked overboard by the concussion was back again and serving his gun in two minutes. A shell exploded in the coal of the "Hatteras," and sent the stuff flying all about the vessel, without injuring a man.

With her prisoners stowed away in all available places about her decks, the "Alabama" headed for Jamaica, and cast anchor in the harbor of Port Royal. There were several English men-of-war there, and the officers of the victorious ship were lionized and feasted to their hearts' content. The prisoners were landed, the "Alabama's" wounds were bound up, and she was made ready for another cruise.

After five days in port, she set out again on her wanderings about the world. Week after week she patrolled the waters in all parts of the globe where ships were likely to be met. Sometimes she would go a fortnight without a capture, and then the men in the forecastle would grow turbulent and restive under the long idleness. Every bit of brass-work was polished hour after hour, and the officers were at their wits' end to devise means for "teasing-time." The men made sword-knots and chafing-gear enough

to last the whole navy, and then looked longingly at the captain's mustache, as the only thing left in which a "Turk's head" could be tied. Music enlivened the hours for a time; but the fiddler was soon voted a bore, and silenced by some one pouring a pint of molasses into the *f*-holes of his instrument. The enraged musician completed the job by breaking it over the head of the joker. After several weeks, they put into Cape Town. Here the practical joker of the crew made himself famous by utterly routing an inquisitive old lady, who asked, "What do you do with your prisoners?" The grizzled old tar dropped his voice to a confidential whisper, and, with a look of the utmost frankness, replied, "We biles 'em, mum. We tried a roast, but there ain't a hounce of meat on one o' them Yankee carkages. Yes, mum, we biles 'em." The startled old lady gasped out, "Good lordy," and fled from the ship.

Putting out from Cape Town, the "Alabama" continued her weary round of cruising. Many vessels were captured, and most of them were burned. One Yankee captain proved too much for Semmes, as his story will show. His ship was chased by the "Alabama" in heavy weather all day, and occasionally fired upon. When the steamer was abeam, "she closed up with us," the captain says, "as near as safety would permit, and, hailing us, asked where we were bound, and demanded the surrender of the ship to the Confederate Government. I answered through my trumpet, 'Come and take me.' Conversation being too straining for the lungs amid the howling of the wind and rolling of the huge billows, and the proximity of the vessels too dangerous, we separated a little, and had recourse to blackboards to carry on our conversation. Semmes asked where we were bound. I answered, without a blush, 'Melbourne,' thinking that possibly he might try to intercept me if he knew that I was to pass through the Straits of Sunda. Then he had the cheek to order me to 'haul down your flag and surrender, escape or no escape,' — on a kind of parole, I suppose he meant. I wrote on the board: 'First capture, then parole.' This answer vexed him, I am sure, for he immediately wrote: 'Surrender, or I will sink you.' I wrote: 'That would be murder, not battle.' — 'Call it what you will, I will do it,' he wrote. 'Attempt it, and by the living God, I will run you down, and we will sink together,' I wrote in reply. I knew his threat was vain; for in that heavy sea, rolling his rails under, he did not dare to free his guns, which were already double

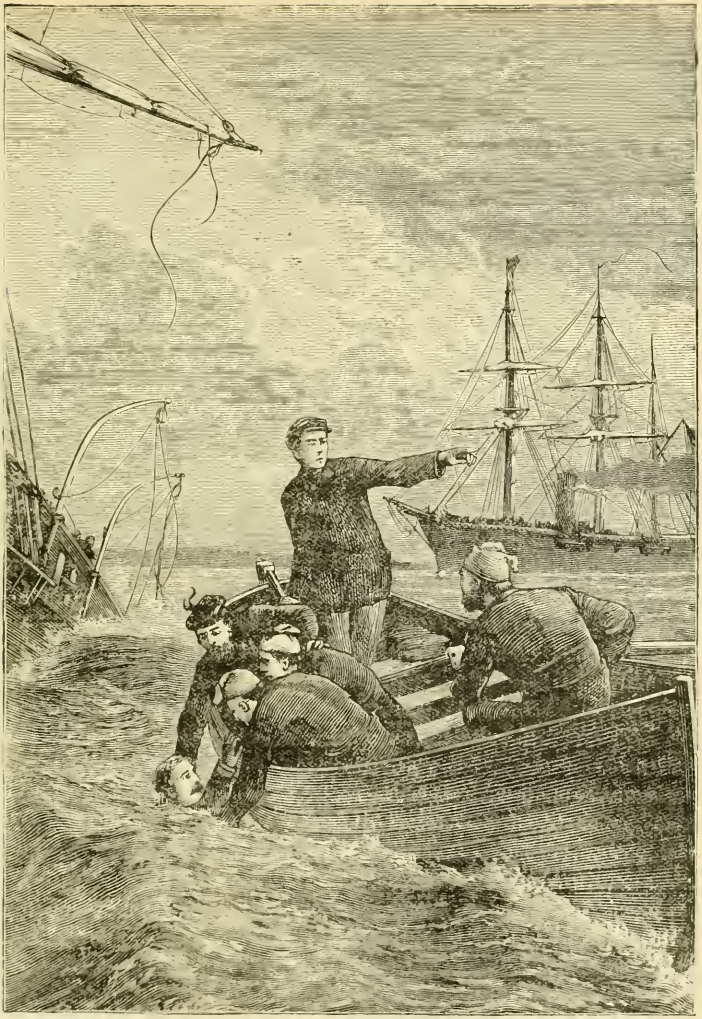
lashed. They would have carried away their tackles, and gone through the bulwarks overboard. Conscious that he had made empty threats, we said no more, but doggedly kept on our course. Sail was still further reduced on both vessels, as the wind kept increasing and was now blowing a gale. We were now gradually and surely drawing ahead of the steamer. It was growing dark. Rejoicing at my fortunate escape, I gave the valiant Semmes a parting shot by hoisting the signal 'Good-by.' Dipping the star-spangled banner as a salute, I hauled it down, and the steamer was soon lost to sight in the darkness. . . . I never saw her after our escape; but, indirectly, she forced me to sell my ship in China soon after."

But we cannot follow the "Alabama" in her career about the world. A full account of her captures would fill volumes; and in this narrative we must pass hastily by the time that she spent scouring the ocean, dodging United States men-of-war, and burning Northern merchantmen, until, on the 11th of June, she entered the harbor of Cherbourg, France, and had hardly dropped anchor when the United States man-of-war "Kearsarge" appeared outside, and calmly settled down to wait for the Confederate to come out and fight. Capt. Semmes seemed perfectly ready for the conflict, and began getting his ship in shape for the battle. The men, too, said that they had had a "plum-pudding voyage" of it so far, and they were perfectly ready for a fight. The forecastle poet was set to work, and soon ground out a song, of which the refrain was, —

> "We're homeward bound, we're homeward bound!
> And soon shall stand on English ground;
> But, ere our native land we see,
> We first must fight the 'Kearsargee.'"

This was the last song made on board the "Alabama," and the poet was never more seen after the fight with the "Kearsargee."

The "Kearsarge" had hardly hove in sight when Capt. Semmes began taking in coal, and ordered the yards sent down from aloft, and the ship put in trim for action. Outside the breakwater, the "Kearsarge" was doing the same thing. In armament, the two vessels were nearly equal; the "Alabama" having eight guns to the "Kearsarge's" seven, but the guns of the latter vessel were heavier and of greater range. In the matter of speed, the "Kearsarge" had a slight advantage. The great advantage



RESCUE OF CAPT. SEMMES.

which the "Kearsarge" had was gained by the forethought of her commander, who had chains hung down her sides, protecting the boilers and machinery. Semmes might easily have done the same thing had the idea occurred to him.

It was on Sunday, June 19, that the "Alabama" started out to the duel that was to end in her destruction. Though Sunday was Capt. Semmes's lucky day, his luck this time seemed to have deserted him. The "Alabama" was accompanied in her outward voyage by a large French iron-clad frigate. The broad breakwater was black with people waiting to see the fight. The news had spread as far as Paris, and throngs had come down by special trains to view the great naval duel. A purple haze hung over the placid water, through which could be seen the "Kearsarge," with her colors flying defiantly, steaming slowly ahead, and ready for the "Alabama" to come up. Small steamers on every side followed the "Alabama," as near the scene of conflict as they dared. One English yacht, the "Deerhound," with her owner's family aboard, hung close to the combatants during the fight. No duel of the age of chivalry had a more eager throng of spectators.

Now the "Alabama" has passed the three-mile line, and is on the open sea. The big French iron-clad stops; the pilot-boats, with no liking for cannon-balls, stop too. The "Deerhound" goes out a mile or so farther, and the "Alabama" advances alone to meet the antagonist that is waiting quietly for her coming. The moment of conflict is at hand; and Capt. Semmes, mustering his men on the deck, addresses them briefly, and sends them to their quarters; and now, with guns shotted, and lanyards taut, and ready for the pull, the "Alabama" rushes toward her enemy. When within a distance of a mile, the first broadside was let fly, without avail. The "Kearsarge," more cool and prudent, waits yet awhile; and, when the first shot does go whizzing from her big Dahlgren guns, it strikes the "Alabama," and makes her quiver all over. Clearly it won't do to fight at long range; and Capt. Semmes determines to close in on his more powerful antagonist, and even try to carry her by boarding, as in the glorious days of Paul Jones. But the wary Winslow of the "Kearsarge" will have none of that; and he keeps his ship at a good distance, all the time pouring great shot into the sides of the "Alabama." Now the two vessels begin circling around each other in mighty circles, each trying to get in a raking position. The men on the "Alabama" began to find that

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ENGAGEMENT OF THE "KEARSARGE" AND "ALABAMA," JUNE 19, 1864

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FIGHT BETWEEN THE U. S. CRUISER "KEARSARGE" AND CONFEDERATE CRUISER "ALABAMA" OFF CHERBOURG, FRANCE, JUNE 19, 1864

their gunpowder was bad and caky; while at the same moment one of the officers saw two big solid shot strike the "Kearsarge" amidships, and fall back into the water, revealing the heretofore unsuspected armor. This was discouraging. Then came a big shot that knocked over the pivot-gun, and killed half its crew. One sailor saw a shot come in a port, glide along the gun, and strike the man at the breach full in the breast, killing him instantly.

The "Kearsarge," too, was receiving some pretty heavy blows, but her iron armor protected her vulnerable parts. One shell lodged in her stern-post, but failed to explode. Had it burst, the "Kearsarge's" fighting would have been over.

After an hour the officers of the "Alabama" began coming to Capt. Semmes with grave faces, and reporting serious accidents. At last the first lieutenant reported the ship sinking, and the order was given to strike the flag. She was sinking rapidly, and the time had come for every man to save himself. The "Kearsarge" was shamefully slow in getting out her boats; and finally when the "Alabama," throwing her bow high in the air, went down with a rush, she carried most of her wounded with her, and left the living struggling in the water. Capt. Semmes was picked up by a boat from the yacht "Deerhound," and was carried in that craft to England away from capture. For so escaping, he has been harshly criticised by many people; but there seems to be no valid reason why he should refuse the opportunity so offered him. Certain it is, that, had he not reached the "Deerhound," he would have been drowned; for none of the boats of the "Kearsarge" were near him when he was struggling in the water.

So ended the career of the "Alabama." Her life had been a short one, and her career not the most glorious imaginable; but she had fulfilled the purpose for which she was intended. She had captured sixty-four merchant-vessels, kept a large number of men-of-war busy in chasing her from one end of the world to the other, and inflicted on American commerce an almost irreparable injury.

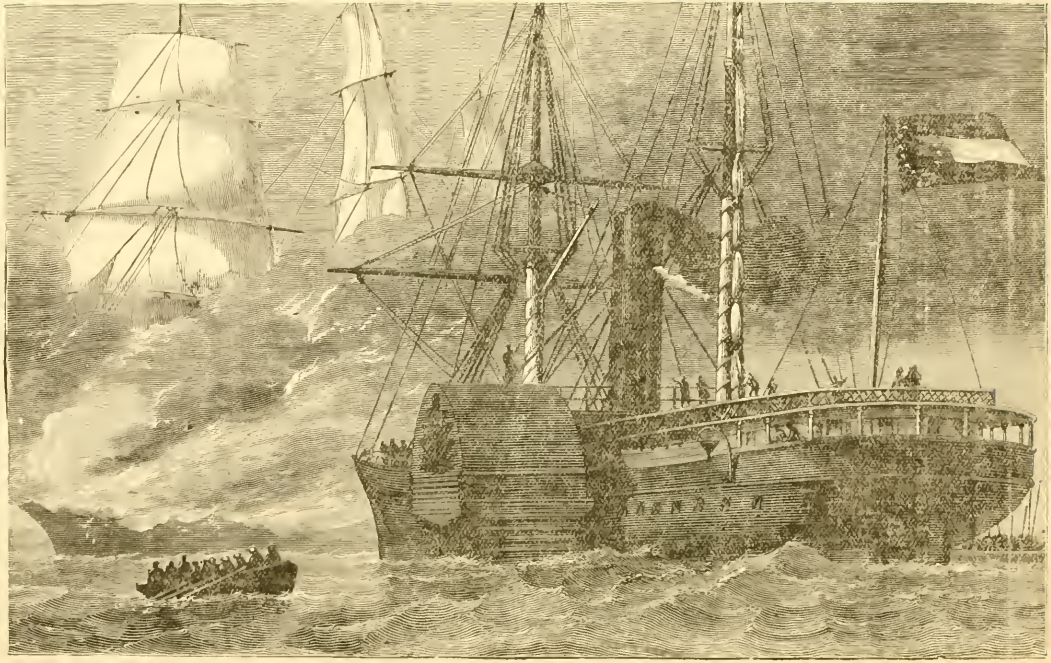
Although the "Alabama" was by all means the most noted and the most successful of all the Confederate cruisers, there were others that entered upon the career of privateering, and followed it for a while with varying degrees of success. Some were captured revenue-cutters, which the Confederates armed with a single heavy gun, and turned loose on the

ocean in search of Yankee schooners. Others were merely tugs or pilot-boats. Generally their careers were short. In one instance a fine privateer, from which the Confederates expected great things, attempted to capture a United States man-of-war, under the delusion that it was a merchant-vessel. The captain of the man-of-war saw the mistake under which the Confederate labored, and allowed the privateer to come up within short range, when, with a sudden broadside, he sent her to the bottom, abruptly terminating her career as a commerce destroyer. Some quite formidable iron-clad cruisers were built abroad; but in most cases all the diplomacy of the Confederate agents proved unavailing to prevent the confiscation of the ships by the neutral governments in whose territory they were built. Two iron-clad rams built at Liverpool, ostensibly for private parties, but really for the Confederate Government, were seized by the British authorities. Six splendid vessels were built in France, but only one succeeded in getting away to join the Confederate service. This one was a ram with armored sides, and was named the "Stonewall." The war was nearly over when she was put in commission, and her services for the Confederacy amounted to nothing. She made one short cruise, during which she fell in with two United States men-of-war, that avoided a fight with her on account of her superior strength. At the end of her cruise the war was over, and she was sold to the Mikado of Japan, whose flag she now carries.

The "Nashville" was an old side-wheel passenger-steamer, of which the Confederates had made a privateer. Her career was a short one. She made one trip to England as a blockade-runner, and on her return voyage she burned three or four United States merchantmen. She then put into the Great Ogeechee River, where she was blockaded by three Union men-of-war. The Confederates protected her by filling the river with torpedoes, and anchoring the ship at a point where the guns of a strong fort could beat back all assailants. Here she lay for several weeks, while the men on the blockaders were fuming at the thought that they were to be kept idle, like cats watching a rat-hole. At last Capt. Worden, who was there with his redoubtable monitor "Montauk," determined to destroy the privateer, despite the torpedoes and the big guns of the fort. He accordingly began a movement up the river, picking his way slowly through the obstructions. The fort began a lively cannonade; but Worden soon found that he had nothing to fear from that quarter, as the guns were not

heavy enough to injure the iron sides of the little monitor. But, as he went up the river, the "Nashville" took the alarm and fled before him; and it seemed that the most the Union fleet could do would be to keep her from coming down again, for with her light draught she could keep well out of range of the monitor's guns. But one morning Worden perceived a strange commotion on the "Nashville;" and, looking carefully through his glass, he saw that she was aground. Now was his time; and at once he pushed forward to a point twelve hundred yards from her, and directly under the guns of Fort MacAllister. From this point he began a deliberate fire upon the doomed privateer. The great guns of the fort were roaring away, and their shells came crashing against the sides of the "Montauk;" but to this Worden paid no heed. It was splendid long distance practice for his gunners; and, when they got the range, not a shot missed the stranded Confederate vessel. From his pilot-house Worden could see the crew of the "Nashville" escaping in boats, leaping into the water over the sides,—doing anything to escape from that terribly destructive fire. All the time the great fifteen-inch shells were dropping into the vessel with fearful precision. By and by a heavy fog fell upon the scene; but the gunners on the "Montauk" knew where their enemy was, and kept up their steady fire, though they could see nothing. When the fog lifted, they saw the "Nashville" a mass of flames; and in a moment she blew up, covering the placid surface of the river with blackened fragments. Then the "Montauk" returned to her consorts, well satisfied with her day's work.

The last of the Confederate privateers to ravage the ocean was the "Shenandoah," originally an English merchant-vessel engaged in the East India trade. She was large, fast, and strongly built; and the astute agent of the Confederacy knew, when he saw her lying in a Liverpool dock, that she was just calculated for a privateer. She was purchased by private parties, and set sail, carrying a large stock of coal and provisions, but no arms. By a strange coincidence, a second vessel left Liverpool the same day, carrying several mysterious gentlemen, who afterwards proved to be Confederate naval officers. The cargo of this second vessel consisted almost entirely of remarkably heavy cases marked "machinery." The two vessels, once out of English waters, showed great fondness for each other, and proceeded together to a deserted, barren island near Madeira. Here they anchored side by side; and the mysterious gentlemen, now resplendent

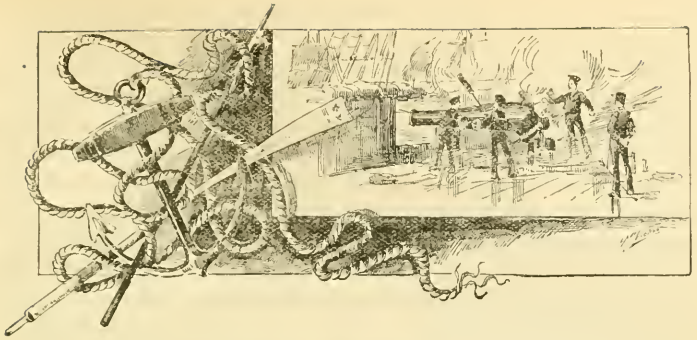


THE "NASHVILLE" BURNING A PRIZE.

in the gray and gold uniform of the Confederacy, stepped aboard the "Shenandoah." Then the cases were hoisted out of the hold of the smaller vessel; and, when the "machinery" was mounted on the gun-deck of the "Shenandoah," it proved to be a number of very fine steel-rifled cannon. Then the crew was mustered on the gun-deck, and informed that they were manning the new Confederate ship "Shenandoah;" and with a cheer the flag was hoisted at the peak, and the newly created ship-of-war started off in search of merchantmen to make bonfires of. From Madeira the cruiser made for the Southern Ocean, — a fresh field not yet ravaged by any Confederate vessel. This made the hunting all the better for the "Shenandoah," and she burned vessels right and left merrily. In the spring of 1865, she put into the harbor of Melbourne, Australia, where her officers were lavishly entertained by the citizens. Thence she proceeded to the northward, spending some time in the Indian Ocean, and skirting the Asiatic coast, until she reached Behrings Straits. Here she lay in wait for returning whalers, who in that season were apt to congregate in Behrings Sea in great numbers, ready for the long voyage around Cape Horn to their home ports on the New England coast. Capt. Waddell was not disappointed in his expectations, for he reached the straits just as the returning whalers were coming out in a body. One day he captured eleven in a bunch. With one-third his crew standing at the guns ready to fire upon any vessel that should attempt to get up sail, Waddell kept the rest of his men rowing from ship to ship, taking off the crews. Finally all the prisoners were put aboard three of the whalers, and the eight empty ships were set afire. It was a grand spectacle. On every side were the towering icebergs, whose glassy sides reflected the lurid glare from the burning ships. Great black volumes of smoke arose from the blazing oil into the clear blue northern sky. The ruined men crowded upon the three whalers saw the fruits of their years of labor thus destroyed in an afternoon, and heaped curses upon the heads of the men who had thus robbed them. What wonder if, in the face of such apparently wanton destruction as this, they overlooked the niceties of the law of war, and called their captors pirates! Yet for the men of the "Shenandoah" it was no pleasant duty to thus cruise about the world, burning and destroying private property, and doing warfare only against unarmed people. More than one has left on record his complaint of the utter unpleasantness of the duty; but all felt that they were aiding the cause for

which their brothers at home were fighting, and so they went on in their work of destruction.

For two months more Waddell continued his depredations in the northern seas. Many a stout bark from New London or New Bedford fell a prey to his zeal for a cause that was even then lost. For the Confederacy had fallen. The last volley of the war had been discharged three months before. Of this Capt. Waddell was ignorant, and his warlike operations did not end until the captain of a British bark told him of the surrender of Lee and Johnston, and the end of the war. To continue his depredations longer would be piracy: so Capt. Waddell hauled down his Confederate flag, and heading for Liverpool surrendered his ship to the British authorities, by whom it was promptly transferred to the United States. So ended the last of the Confederate privateers.



## CHAPTER XII.

WORK OF THE GULF SQUADRON.—THE FIGHT AT THE PASSES OF THE MISSISSIPPI.—DESTRUCTION OF THE SCHOONER "JUDAH."—THE BLOCKADE OF GALVESTON, AND CAPTURE OF THE "HARRIET LANE."

THE naval forces of the United States during the war may be roughly classified as the Atlantic fleets, the river navy, and the Gulf squadron. The vessels comprising the latter detachment enjoyed some light service during the opening months of the war; but, as the time went on, the blue-jackets of the Gulf squadron found that they had no reason to congratulate themselves on securing an easy berth. Their blockading duty was not so arduous as that of their brothers along the rugged Atlantic coast; but they were harassed continually by Confederate rams, which would make a dash into the fleet, strike heavy blows, and then fly up some convenient river far into the territory of the Confederacy. One such attack was made upon the squadron blockading the Mississippi in October, 1861.

Some eighty miles below New Orleans, the Mississippi divides into three great channels, which flow at wide angles from each other into the Gulf of Mexico. These streams flow between low marshy banks hardly higher than the muddy surface of the river, covered with thick growths of willows, and infested with reptiles and poisonous insects. The point from which these three streams diverge is known as the "Head of the Passes," and it was

here that the blockading squadron of four vessels was stationed. The ships swung idly at their moorings for weeks. The pestilential vapors from the surrounding marshes were rapidly putting all the crews in the sick bay, while the clouds of gnats and mosquitoes that hung about made Jack's life a wretched one. They did not even have the pleasurable excitement of occasionally chasing a blockade-runner, for the wary merchants of New Orleans knew that there was absolutely no hope of running a vessel out through a river so effectually blockaded. And so the sailors idled away their time, smoking, singing, dancing to the music of a doleful fiddle, boxing with home-made canvas gloves that left big spots of black and blue where they struck, and generally wishing that "Johnny Reb" would show himself so that they might have some excitement, even if it did cost a few lives.

But while the blue-jackets at the mouth of the river were spending their time thus idly, the people in the beleaguered city higher up were vastly enraged at being thus cooped up, and were laying plans to drive their jailers away. Occasionally they would take a small fleet of flat boats, bind them together, and heap them high with tar, pitch, and light wood. Then the whole would be towed down the river, set on fire, and drifted down upon the fleet. The light of the great fire could be seen far off, and the war-ships would get up steam and dodge the roaring mass of flames as it came surging down on the swift current. So many trials of this sort failed, that finally the people of the Crescent City gave up this plan in disgust.

Their next plan seemed for a time successful. It was at four o'clock one October morning that the watch on the sloop-of-war "Richmond" suddenly saw a huge dark mass so close to the ship that it seemed fairly to have sprung from the water, and sweeping down rapidly. The alarm was quickly given, and the crew beat to quarters. Over the water from the other ships, now fully alarmed, came the roll of the drums beating the men to their guns. The dark object came on swiftly, and the word was passed from man to man, "It's a Confederate ram." And indeed it was the ram "Manassas," which the Confederates had been hard at work building in the New Orleans ship-yards, and on which they relied to drive the blockading squadron from the river. As she came rushing towards the "Richmond," two great lights higher up the river told of fire-rafts bearing down upon the fleet, and by the fitful glare three smaller gun-boats were seen coming to the assistance of the "Manassas." Clearly the Confederates were attacking in force.

The first volley from the fleet rattled harmlessly from the iron-clad sides of the "Manassas;" and, not heeding it, she swept on and plunged into the side of the "Richmond." The great iron prow cut deep into the wooden sides of the Union vessel. Heavy oaken timbers were splintered like laths, and the men were violently hurled to the deck. As the ram drew away, the blue-jackets sprang to their guns and gave her a volley. Some of the shots must have penetrated her armor, for she became unmanageable. But the darkness prevented the officers of the "Richmond" from seeing how much damage they had done, and they did not follow up their advantage. The strange panic that the sight of a ram so often brought upon sailors of the old school fell on the officers of this squadron, and they began hastily getting their ships out of the river. By this time four more Confederate steamers had come to the aid of the ram, and were cannonading the Northern fleet at long range. In their hurried attempt to escape, the "Richmond" and the "Vincennes" had run aground. The captain of the latter vessel, fearing capture, determined to fire his vessel and escape with his crew to the "Richmond." Accordingly he laid a slow-match to the magazine, lighted it, and then, wrapping his ship's colors about his waist in the most theatrical manner, abandoned his ship. But the plan was not altogether a success. As he left the ship, he was followed by a grizzled old sailor, who had seen too much fighting to believe in blowing up his own ship; and, when he saw the smoking slow-match, he hastily broke off the lighted end, and without saying a word threw it into the water. No one observed the action, and the crew of the "Vincennes" watched mournfully for their good ship to go up in a cloud of smoke and flame. After they had watched nearly an hour, they concluded something was wrong, and returned to their old quarters. By this time the enemy had given up the conflict, and the United States navy was one ship ahead for the old sailor's act of insubordination. The Confederate flotilla returned to New Orleans, and reported that they had driven the blockaders away. There was great rejoicing in the city: windows were illuminated, and receptions were tendered to the officers of the Confederate fleet. But, while the rejoicing was still going on, the Union ships came quietly back to their old position, and the great river was as securely closed as ever.

About a month before the fight with the "Manassas," the blue-jackets of the North scored for themselves a brilliant success in the harbor of Pensacola. The frigate "Colorado" was lying outside the harbor of that

city, within clear view of the city front. For some weeks the sailors had been greatly interested in watching the activity of people on shore around a small schooner that was lying in a basin near the navy-yard. With a harbor so thoroughly blockaded as was that of Pensacola, there seemed really no need of new vessels; and the haste of the Confederates seemed inexplicable, until they saw through their glasses men at work mounting a heavy pivot-gun amidships. That made it clear that another privateer

FORT PENSACOLA.

was being fitted out to ravage the seas and burn all vessels flying the United States flag. The gallant tars of the "Colorado" determined to go in and burn the privateer before she should have a chance to escape. It was an undertaking of great peril. The schooner was near the navy-yard, where one thousand men were ready to spring to her assistance at the first alarm. On the dock fronting the navy-yard were mounted a ten-inch columbiad and a twelve-pounder field-piece, so placed as to command the deck

of the schooner and the wharf to which she was moored. Fort Pensacola, not far distant, was full of Confederate troops. But the Union sailors thought that the destruction of the privateer was of enough importance to warrant the risk, and they determined to try the adventure.

Accordingly, on the first dark night, four boats, containing one hundred officers, sailors, and marines, put off from the side of the "Colorado," and headed for the town. All was done with the most perfect silence. The tholes of the oars were wrapped in cloth to deaden their rattle in the row-locks. No lights were carried. Not a word was spoken after the officers in muffled tones had given the order, "Give way." Through the darkness of the night the heavy boats glide on. Every man aboard has his work laid out for him, and each knows what he is to do. While the main body are to be engaged in beating back the guards, some are to spike the guns, and others to fire the schooner in several places. When within a hundred yards of the schooner, they are discovered by the sentry. As his ringing hail comes over the water, the sailors make no reply, but bend to the oars, and the boats fairly leap toward the wharf. Bang! goes the sentry's rifle; and the men in the hold of the schooner come rushing up just as the two boats dash against her side, and the sailors spring like cats over the bulwarks. One man was found guarding the guns on the wharf, and was shot down. Little time is needed to spike the guns, and then those on the wharf turn in to help their comrades on the schooner. Here the fighting is sharp and hand to hand. Nearly a hundred men are crowded on the deck, and deal pistol-shots and cutlass-blows right and left. Several of the crew of the schooner have climbed into the tops, and from that point of vantage pour down on the attacking party a murderous fire. Horrid yells go up from the enraged combatants, and the roar of the musketry is deafening. The crew of the schooner are forced backward, step by step, until at last they are driven off the vessel altogether, and stand on the wharf delivering a rapid fire. The men from the navy-yard are beginning to pour down to the wharf to take a hand in the fight. But now a column of smoke begins to arise from the open companionway; and the blue-jackets see that their work is done, and tumble over the side into their boats. It is high time for them to leave, for the Confederates are on the wharf in overwhelming force. As they stand there, crowded together, the retiring sailors open on them with canister from two

howitzers in the boats. Six rounds of this sort of firing sends the Confederates looking for shelter; and the sailors pull off through the darkness to their ship, there to watch the burning vessel, until, with a sudden burst of flame, she is blown to pieces.

Considering the dashing nature of this exploit, the loss of life was wonderfully small. Lieut. Blake, who commanded one of the boats, was saved by one of those strange accidents so common in war. As he was going over the side of the "Colorado," some one handed him a metal flask filled with brandy, to be used for the wounded. He dropped it into the lower pocket of his overcoat, but, finding it uncomfortable there, changed it to the side pocket of his coat, immediately over his heart. When the boats touched the side of the schooner, Blake was one of the first to spring into the chains and clamber aboard. Just as he was springing over the gunwale, a Confederate sailor pointed a pistol at his heart, and fired it just as Blake cut him down with a savage cutlass-stroke. The bullet sped true to its mark, but struck the flask, and had just enough force to perforate it, without doing any injury to the lieutenant.

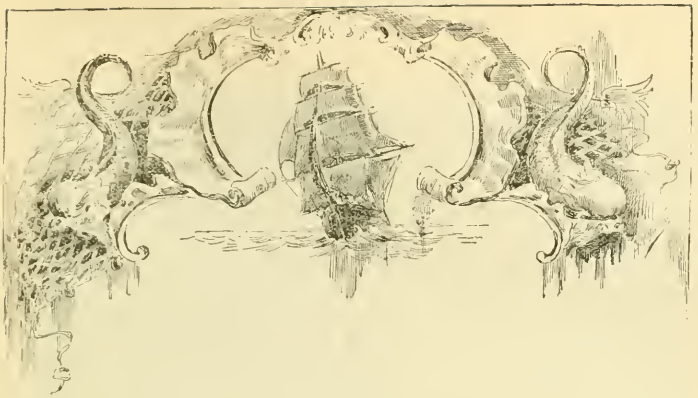
The first death in the fight was a sad one. A marine, the first man to board the schooner, lost his distinguishing white cap in his leap. His comrades followed last behind him, and, seeing that he wore no cap, took him for one of the enemy, and plunged their bayonets deep in his breast, killing him instantly. He was known to his comrades as John Smith, but on searching his bag letters were found proving that this was not his own name. One from his mother begged him to return home, and give up his roving life. He proved to be a well-educated young man, who through fear of some disgrace had enlisted in the marines to hide himself from the world.

Another dashing event occurred on the Gulf Coast some months later, although in this instance the Confederates were the assailants and the victors. Galveston had for some time been in the hands of the Union forces, and was occupied by three regiments of United States troops. In the harbor lay three men-of-war, whose cannon kept the town in subjection. It had been rumored for some time that the Confederates were planning to re-capture the city, and accordingly the most vigilant lookout was kept from all the ships. On the 1st of January, 1863, at half-past one A.M., as the lookout on the "Harriet Lane" was thinking of the new year just

ushered in, and wondering whether before the end of that year he could see again his cosey Northern home and wife and friends, he saw far up the river a cloud of black smoke, that rose high in the air, and blotted from sight the shining winter stars. He rubbed his eyes, and looked again. There was no mistake: the smoke was there, and rapidly moving toward him. Clearly it was a steamer coming down the river; but whether an armed enemy or a blockade-runner, he could not say. He gave the alarm; and in a moment the roll of the drums made the sailors below spring from their hammocks, and, hastily throwing on their clothes, rush on deck. The drums beat to quarters, and the crew were soon at their guns. Over the water came the roll of the drums from the other ships, and from the troops on shore, now all aroused and in arms For thirty hours the Federals had been expecting this attack, and now they were fully prepared for it.

The attacking vessels came nearer, and the men on the Union ships strained their eyes to see by the faint starlight what manner of craft they had to meet. They proved to be two large river-steamships, piled high with cotton-bales, crowded with armed men, and provided with a few field-pieces. Clearly they were only dangerous at close quarters, and the "Lane" at once began a rapid fire to beat them back. But the bad light spoiled her gunners' aim, and she determined to rush upon the enemy, and run him down. The Confederate captain managed his helm skilfully, and the "Lane" struck only a glancing blow. Then, in her turn, the "Lane" was rammed by the Confederate steamer, which plunged into her with a crash and a shock which seemed almost to lift the ships out of water. The two vessels drifted apart, the "Lane" hardly injured, but the Confederate with a gaping wound in his bow which sent him to the bottom in fifteen minutes. But now the other Confederate came bearing down under a full head of steam, and crashed into the "Lane." Evidently the Confederates wanted to fight in the old style; for they threw out grappling-irons, lashed the two ships side to side, and began pouring on to the deck of the Federal ship for a hand-to-hand conflict. Cries of anger and pain, pistol-shots, cutlass blows, and occasional roars from the howitzers rose on the night air, and were answered by the sounds of battle from the shore, where the Confederates had attacked the slender Union garrison. The sinking steamer took up a position near the "Lane," and poured broadside after broadside upon the struggling Union ship. But where were the other three

Union vessels all this time? It seemed as though their commanders had lost all their coolness; for they ran their vessels here and there, now trying to do something to help their friends on shore, now making an ineffectual attempt to aid the "Harriet Lane." But on board that vessel matters were going badly for the Federals. The Confederates in great numbers kept pouring over the bulwarks, and were rapidly driving the crew from the deck. Capt. Wainwright lay dead at the door of the cabin. Across his body stood his young son, his eyes blazing, his hair waving in the wind. He held in his right hand a huge revolver, which he was firing without aim into the tossing mass of struggling men before him, while he called on his dead father to rise and help him. A stray bullet cut off two of his fingers, and the pain was too much for the little hero only ten years old; and, dropping the pistol, he burst into tears, crying, "Do you want to kill me?" The blue-jackets began to look anxiously for help toward the other vessels. But, even while they looked, they saw all hope of help cut off; for with a crash and a burst of flame the "Westfield" blew up. It turned out later, that, finding his ship aground, the captain of the "Westfield" had determined to abandon her, and fire the magazine; but in fixing his train he made a fatal error, and the ship blew up, hurling captain and crew into the air. The men on the "Harriet Lane" saw that all hope was gone, and surrendered their ship. When the captains of the two remaining gunboats saw the stars and stripes fall from the peak, they turned their vessels' prows toward the sea, and scudded out of danger of capture. At the same moment, cheers from the gray-coats on shore told that the Confederates had been successful both by land and sea, and the stars and bars once more floated over Galveston.



## CHAPTER XIII.

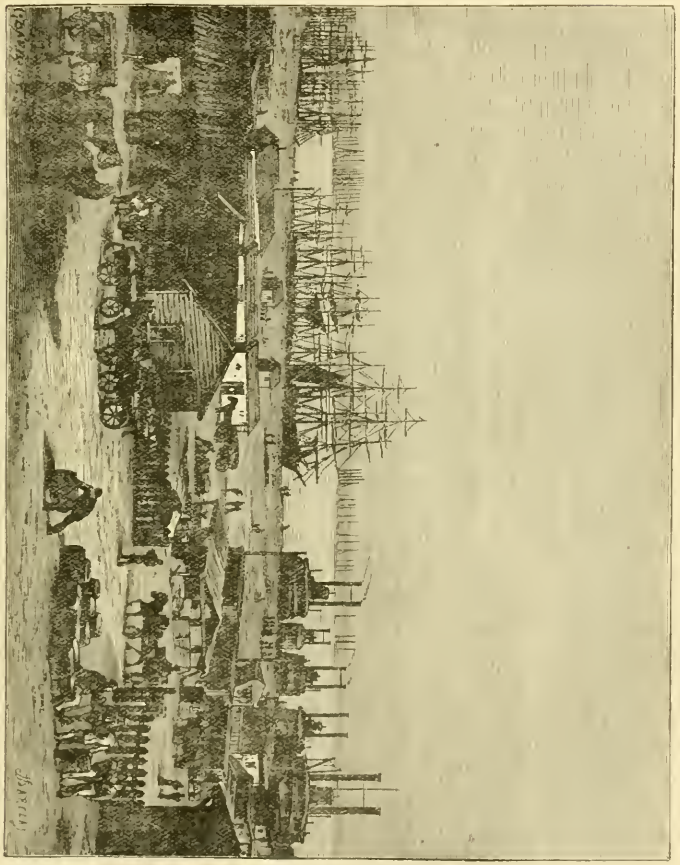
THE CAPTURE OF NEW ORLEANS.—FARRAGUT'S FLEET PASSES FORT ST. PHILIP AND FORT JACKSON.

WHILE Commodore Foote, with his flotilla of gunboats and mortar-boats, was working his way down the Mississippi River, making occasional dashes into the broad streams that flow from either side into the father of waters, Admiral Farragut, with his fleet of tall-sparred, ocean-going men-of-war, was laying his plans for an expedition up-stream. But Farragut's first obstacle lay very near the mouth of the broad, tawny river that flows for a thousand miles through the centre of the United States. New Orleans, the greatest city of the Confederacy, stands on the river's bank, only ninety miles from the blue waters of the Gulf of Mexico. The Confederate authorities knew the value of this great city to their cause, and were careful not to let it go unprotected. Long before any thought of civil war disturbed the minds of the people of the United States, the Federal Government had built below the Crescent City two forts, that peered at each other across the swift, turbid tide of the Mississippi River. Fort St. Philip and Fort Jackson they were called, the latter being named in honor of the stubborn old military hero who beat back the British soldiers at the close of the war of 1812 on the glorious field of Chalmette near New Orleans. Fort Jackson was a huge

star of stone and mortar. In its massive walls were great cavernous bomb-proofs in which the soldiers were secure from bursting shells. It stood back about a hundred yards from the levee, and its casemates just rose above the huge dike that keeps the Mississippi in its proper channel. When the river was high from the spring floods of the north, a steamer floating on its swift tide towered high above the bastions of the fort. In the casemates and on the parapets were mounted seventy-five guns of all calibres. By its peculiar shape and situation on a jutting point of land, the fort was able to bring its guns to bear upon the river in three directions.

When the storm of civil war burst upon the country, the Confederates of New Orleans were prompt to seize this and Fort St. Philip, that stood on the other side of the river. They found Fort Jackson in the state of general decay into which most army posts fall in times of peace, and they set at work at once to strengthen it. All over the parapet, bomb-proofs, and weak points, bags of sand were piled five or six feet deep, making the strongest defence known in war. Steamers plied up and down the river, bringing provision, ammunition, and new cannon, and soon the fort was ready to stand the most determined siege. Fort St. Philip, across the river, though not so imposing a military work, was more powerful. It was built of masonry, and heavily sodded over all points exposed to fire. It was more irregular in shape than Fort Jackson, and with its guns seemed to command every point on the river. Both were amply protected from storming by wide, deep moats always filled with water.

In these two forts were stationed troops made up of the finest young men of New Orleans. For them it was a gay station. Far removed from the fighting on the frontier, and within an easy journey of their homes, they frolicked away the first year of the war. Every week gay parties of pleasure-seekers from New Orleans would come down; and the proud defenders would take their friends to the frowning bastions, and point out how easily they could blow the enemy's fleet out of water if the ships ever came within range of those heavy guns. But the ships did not come within range of the guns for many months. They contented themselves with lying at the Head of the Passes, and stopping all intercourse with the outer world, until New Orleans began to get shabby and ragged and hungry, and the pleasure-parties came less often to the forts, and the gay young soldiers saw their uniforms getting old and tattered, but knew not where to get the cloth to replace them.



LEVEE AT NEW ORLEANS BEFORE THE WAR.

In the city no rumble of commerce was heard on the streets. Grass grew on the deserted levee, where in times of peace the brown and white

cotton-bales were piled by the thousand, waiting for strong black hands to seize and swing them upon the decks of the trim Liverpool packets, that lay three or four deep along the river front. The huge gray custom-house that stood at the foot of Canal Street no longer resounded with the rapid tread of sea-captains or busy merchants. From the pipes of the cotton-presses, the rush of the escaping steam, as the ruthless press squeezed the great bale into one-third its original size, was no longer heard. Most of the great towering steamboats that came rushing down the river with stores of cotton or sugar had long since been cut down into squat, powerful gunboats, or were tied up idly to the bank. Across the river, in the ship-yards of Algiers, there seemed a little more life; for there workmen were busy changing peaceful merchant vessels into gunboats and rams, that were, the people fondly hoped, to drive away the men-of-war at the river's mouth and save the city from starvation. From time to time the streets of the city resounded with the notes of drum and fife, as one after the other the militia companies went off to the front and the fighting. Then the time came when none were left save the "Confederate Guards," old gray-haired men, judges, bankers, merchants, gentlemen of every degree, too old for active service at the front, but too young not to burn for the grasp of a gun or sword while they knew that their sons and grandsons were fighting on the blood-stained soil of Virginia and Tennessee.

But, while the city was gradually falling into desolation and decay, preparations were being made by the Federal navy for its capture. On the 2d of February, 1862, Admiral Farragut sailed from Hampton Roads in his stanch frigate the "Hartford," to take command of a naval expedition intended to capture New Orleans. The place of rendezvous was Ship Island, a sandy island in the Gulf of Mexico. Here he organized his squadron, and started for his post in the Mississippi, below the forts. The first obstacle was found at the mouth of the river, where the heavy war-vessels were unable to make their way over the bar. Nearly two weeks were occupied in the work of lightening these ships until they were able to pass. The frigate "Colorado" was unable to get over at all. The "Pensacola" was dragged through the mud by the sheer strength of other vessels of the expedition. While they were tugging at her, a huge hawser snapped with a report like a cannon, and the flying ends killed two men

and seriously wounded five others. But at last the fleet was safely past all obstacles, and Admiral Farragut found himself well established in the lower Mississippi, with a force of twenty-five men-of-war, and twenty mortar-schooners; one of the most powerful armadas ever despatched against an enemy. Farragut lost no time in getting his ships prepared for the baptism of fire which was sure to come. While he was diligently at work on his preparations, he was visited by some French and English naval officers, who had carefully examined the defences of the Confederates, and came to warn him that to attack the forts with wooden vessels, such as made up his fleet, was sheer madness, and would only result in defeat. "You may be right," answered the brave old sailor, "but I was sent here to make the attempt. I came here to reduce or pass the forts, and to take New Orleans, *and I shall try it on.*" The foreigners remarked that he was going to certain destruction, and politely withdrew.

In the mean time, the tars on the mortar-fleet were working industriously to get their ships in fighting-trim. The topmasts were stripped of their sails, and lowered; the loose and standing rigging strapped to the masts; the spars, forebooms, and gaffs unshipped, and secured to the outside of the vessels to avert the danger from splinters, which, in naval actions, is often greater than from the shots themselves. From the main-deck every thing was removed that could obstruct the easy handling of the tremendous mortars; and the men were drilled to skill and alertness in firing the huge engines of death. The work was hastened on the mortar-schooners, because the plan was to rush them into position, and let them harass the Confederates with a steady bombardment, while the ships-of-war were preparing for their part in the coming fight.

The mortar-fleet was under command of Admiral Porter, an able and energetic officer. He soon had his ships ready, and began moving them into position along the banks of the river, out of sight of the forts. To further conceal them from the gunners in the forts, he had the masts and rigging wrapped with green foliage; so that, lying against the dense thickets of willows that skirt that part of the river, they were invisible. Other boats that were in more exposed positions had their hulls covered with grass and reeds, so that they seemed a part of the swamp that bordered the river. After the line of fire had been obtained by a careful mathematical survey, Porter got all his mortar-boats into position, and

began his bombardment. The gunners on the mortar-boats could not see the forts; but the range had been calculated for them, and they merely fired mechanically. A lookout, perched on the masthead, could see over the low willow-forest, and watch the course of the shells as they rushed high into the air, and then, falling with a graceful curve, plunged into the forts. The firing was begun on the 16th of April, and was kept up with a will. The twenty huge mortars keeping up a constant fire, made a deafening roar that shook the earth, and could be heard far up the river at New Orleans, where the people poured out into the streets, and gayly predicted defeat for any enemy who should attack "the boys in the forts." The forts were not slow in returning the fire; but as the mortar-vessels were hidden, and did not offer very large marks, their fire was rather ineffective. Parties of Confederates, old swamp-hunters, and skilled riflemen, stole down through the dense thickets, to pick off the crews of the mortar-schooners. They managed to kill a few gunners in this way, but were soon driven away by the point-blank fire of the supporting gunboats. But all this time the shells were falling thick and fast, driving the soldiers to the bomb-proofs, and tearing to pieces every thing unprotected. One shell set fire to some wooden structures that stood on the parade-ground in Fort Jackson; and, as the smoke and flames rose in the air, the gunners down the river thought that the fort was burning, and cheered and fired with renewed vigor. The shells that burst upon the levee soon cut great trenches in it, so that the mighty Mississippi broke through with a rush, and flooded the country all about. But the forts seemed as strong and unconquered as ever.

While the soldiers were crowded together in the bomb-proofs to escape the flying bits of shell, the sailors on the little fleet of Confederate vessels anchored above them were busily engaged in getting ready a fire-raft which was to float down the river, and make havoc among the vessels of the Union fleet. Two such rafts were prepared; one of which, an immense affair, carrying cords of blazing pine-wood, was sent down in the early morning at a time when the vessels were utterly unprepared to defend themselves. Luckily it grounded on a sandbar, and burned and crackled away harmlessly until it was consumed. This warned Commander Porter of the danger in which his mortar-vessels were of a second attack of the same nature; and accordingly he put in readiness one hundred and fifty

small boats with picked crews, and well supplied with axes and grapnels, whose duty it was to grapple any future rafts, and tow them into a harmless position. They did not have long to wait. At sundown that night, Commander Porter reviewed his little squadron of row-boats as they lay drawn up in line along the low marshy shores of the mighty river. The sun sank a glowing red ball beneath the line at which the blue waters of the gulf and the blue arch of heaven seemed to meet. The long southern twilight gradually deepened into a black, moonless night. The cries of frogs and seabirds, and the little flashes of the fireflies, were silenced and blotted out by the incessant roar and flash of the tremendous mortars that kept up their deadly work. Suddenly in the distance the sky grows red and lurid. "The fort is burning!" cry the men at the guns; but from the masthead comes the response, "No, the fire is on the river. It is another fire-raft." The alarm was instantly given to all the vessels of the fleet. Bright colored signal-lights blazed on the decks, and the dark, slender cordage stood out against the brilliant red and green fires that flickered strangely upon the dark wooded banks of the river. Rockets rushed high into the air, and, bursting, let fall a shower of party-colored lights that told the watchers far down the river that danger was to be expected. Then the signal-lights went out, and all was dark and silent save where the lurid glare of the great mass of fire could be seen floating in the great curves of the tortuous river toward the crowded ships. It was a time of intense suspense. The little flotilla of fire-boats, organized by Commander Porter that day, was on the alert; and the blue-jackets bent to their oars with a will, and soon had their boats ranged along a bend far above the fleet. Here they waited to catch the fiery monster, and save the ships. The danger came nearer fast. Rapidly the flames increased in volume, until the whole surrounding region was lighted up by the glare; while from the floating fire, a huge black column of smoke arose, and blended with the clouds that glowed as though they themselves were on fire. When the raft came into view around a point, it was seen to be too big for the boats to handle unaided, and two gunboats slipped their cables, and started for the thing of terror From every side the row-boats dashed at the raft. Some grappled it, and the sailors tugged lustily at their oars, seeking to drag the mass of flames toward the shore. Then the "Westfield," under full head of steam, dashed furiously against the raft, crashing in the timbers

and sending great clouds of sparks flying high in the air. From her hose-pipes she poured floods of water on the crackling, roaring, blazing mass; while all the time, with her powerful engines, she was pushing it toward the shore.

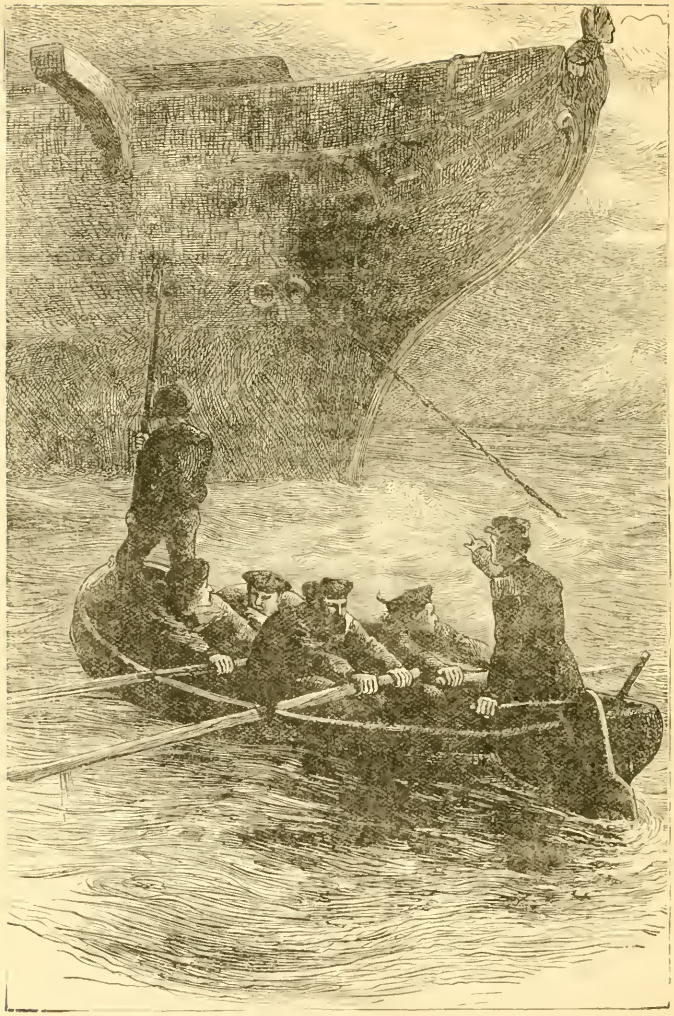
In the mean time, the sailors from the fleet of small boats were swarming upon the raft wherever they could find a foot-hold free from flame. Some carrying buckets dashed water upon the flames, some with axes cut loose flaming timbers, and let them float harmlessly down the river. It was a fight in which all the men were on one side; but it was a grand sight, and was eagerly watched by those on the imperilled vessels. The immediate arena of the conflict was bright as day, but all around was gloom. At last the pluck and determination of the men triumph over the flames. The raft, flaming, smouldering, broken, is towed out of the channel, and left to end its life in fitful flashes on a sandy point. The returning boats are greeted with cheers, and soon darkness and silence fall upon the scene. The mortars cease their thunderous work for the night; and ere long the only sounds heard are the rush of the mighty waters, or the faint cry of the night birds in the forest. The sentinel pacing the deck peers in vain through the gloom. War gives way for a time to rest.

Hardly had the gray dawn begun to appear, when the roll of the drums on the decks of the ships was heard; and, soon after, the roar of the opening gun was heard from one of the mortar-schooners. Again the bombardment was opened. The twenty boats in the mortar-fleet were divided into three divisions, each of which fired for two hours in succession, and then stopped for a time to allow the great cannon to cool. Thus a continuous bombardment was kept up, and the soldiers in the forts were given no time to repair the damages caused by the bursting shells. Every mortar was fired once in five minutes; so that one shell was hurled towards the fort about every minute, while sometimes three shells would be seen sweeping with majestic curves through the air at the same time. The shells weighed two hundred and fifteen pounds; and when they were hurled into the air by the explosion of twenty pounds of powder, the boat bearing the mortar was driven down into the water six or eight inches, and the light railings and woodwork of buildings at the Balize, thirty miles away, were shattered by the concussion. The shells rose high in the air, with an unearthly

shriek, and after a curve of a mile and a half fell into or near the forts, and, bursting, threw their deadly fragments in all directions. Day after day, and night after night, this went on. If the men on the mortar-schooners showed bravery and endurance in keeping up so exhausting a fire so steadily, what shall we say for the men in the forts who bore up against it so nobly? Before noon of the first day of the bombardment, the soldiers of Fort Jackson saw their barracks burned, with their clothing, bedding, and several days' rations. Shells were pouring in upon them from vessels that they could not see. The smooth-bore guns mounted in the embrasures would hardly send a shot to the nearest of the hostile gunboats. Then the river broke through its banks, and half the fort was transformed into a morass. An officer in Fort Jackson said, after the surrender, that in two hours over one hundred shells had fallen upon the parade-ground of that work, tearing it up terribly. For six days this terrible fire was endured; and during the latter half of the bombardment the water stood knee deep on the gun-platforms, and the gunners worked at their guns until their shoes, soaked for days and days, fairly fell from their feet. For bed and bedding they had the wet earth, for rations raw meat and mouldy bread. If there were glory and victory for the Union sailors, let there at least be honor and credit granted the soldiers of the gray for the dogged courage with which they bore the terrible bombardment from Porter's flotilla.

While the mortars were pounding away through those six long days and nights, Farragut was getting ready to take his ships past the forts. Union scouts and spies had travelled over every foot of land and water about the forts; and the exact strength of the Confederates, and the difficulties to be overcome, were clearly known to the Federal admiral. One of the chief obstructions was a chain of rafts and old hulks that stretched across the channel by which the fleet would be obliged to ascend the river. Under cover of a tremendous fire from all the mortars, two gunboats were sent up to remove this obstruction. The night was dark and favorable to the enterprise, and the vessels reached the chain before they were discovered. Then, under a fierce cannonade from the forts, Lieut. Caldwell put off in a row-boat from his vessel, boarded one of the hulks, and managed to break the chain. The string of hulks was quickly swept ashore by the swift current, and the channel was open for the ascent of the Union fleet.

On the 23d of April, Farragut determined that his fleet should make the



BREAKING THE CHAIN

attempt to get past the forts the following day. He knew that the enemy must be exhausted with the terrible strain of Porter's bombardment, and he felt that the opportunity had arrived for him to make a successful dash for the upper river. The fleet was all prepared for a desperate struggle. Many of the captains had daubed the sides of their vessels with the river mud, that they might be less prominent marks for the Confederate gunners. The chain cables of all the vessels were coiled about vulnerable parts, or draped over the sides amidships to protect the boilers. Knowing that it was to be a night action, the gun-decks had been whitewashed; so that even by the dim, uncertain light of the battle lanterns, the gunners could see plainly all objects about them. Hammocks and nettings were stretched above the decks to catch flying splinters from the spars overhead. Late at night the admiral in his longboat was pulled from ship to ship to view the preparations made, and see that each captain fully understood his orders.

It was two o'clock on the morning of the 24th of April, when the Confederates on the parapets of their forts might have heard the shrill notes of fifes, the steady tramp of men, the sharp clicking of capstans, and the grating of chain cables passing through the hawse-holes on the ships below. Indeed, it is probable that these sounds were heard at the forts, and were understood, for the Confederates were on the alert when the ships came steaming up the river.

They formed in a stately line of battle, headed by the "Cayuga." As they came up the stream, the gunners in the forts could see the mastheads over the low willow thickets that bordered the banks of the stream. The line of obstructions was reached and passed, and then the whole furious fire of both forts fell upon the advancing ships. Gallantly they kept on their way, firing thunderous broadsides from each side. And, while the ships were under the direct fire of the forts, the enemy's fleet came dashing down the river to dispute the way. This was more to the taste of Farragut and his boys in blue. They were tired of fighting stone walls. In the van of the Confederate squadron was the ram "Manassas," that had created such a panic among the blockading squadron a month before. She plunged desperately into the fight. The great frigate "Brooklyn" was a prominent vessel in the Union line, and at her the ram dashed. The bold hearts on the grand old frigate did not seek to avoid the conflict, and the two vessels

rushed together. The ram struck the "Brooklyn" a glancing blow; and the shot from her one gun was returned by a hail of cannon-balls from the frigate's tremendous broadside, many of which broke through the iron plating. Nothing daunted, the ram backed off and rushed at the frigate again. This time she struck full on the frigate's side. The shock was terrible. Men on the gun-deck of the ram were hurled to the deck, with the blood streaming from their nostrils. The frigate keeled over farther and farther, until all thought that she would be borne beneath the water by the pressure of the ram. All the time the spiteful bow-gun of the iron monster was hurling its bolts into her hull. But the blow of the ram had done no damage, for she had struck one of the coils of chain that had been hung down the "Brooklyn's" side. The two vessels slowly swung apart; and, after a final broadside from the "Brooklyn," the "Manassas" drifted away in the pitchy darkness to seek for new adversaries. She was not long in finding one; for as the gray dawn was breaking she suddenly found herself under the very bows of the "Mississippi," which was bearing down upon her and seemed sure to run her down. The captain of the "Manassas" was an able steersman, and neatly dodged the blow; but in this quick movement he ran his vessel ashore, and she lay there under the guns of the "Mississippi," and unable to bring any of her own guns to bear. The captain of the frigate was not slow in taking advantage of this chance to be revenged for all the trouble she had given the Union fleet; and he took up a good position, and pounded away with his heavy guns at the iron monster. The heavy shots crashed through the iron plating and came plunging in the portholes, seeking every nook and cranny about the vessel. It was too much for men to stand, and the crew of the "Manassas" fled to the woods; while their vessel was soon set on fire with red-hot shots, and blew up with a tremendous report soon after.

In the mean time, the ships of the Union fleet were doing daring work, and meeting a determined resistance. The flag-ship "Hartford" was met by a tug which pushed a huge burning fire-raft against her sides. There the flaming thing lay right up against the port-holes, the flames catching the tarred rigging, and running up the masts. Farragut walked his quarter-deck as coolly as though the ship was on parade. "Don't flinch from that fire, boys," he sang out, as the flames rushed in the port-holes, and drove the men from their guns. "There's a hotter fire than that for those who

FARRAGUT'S FLEET ENGAGING FORTS JACKSON AND ST. PHILIP AND CONFEDERATE FLEET ON THE MISSISSIPPI RIVER, BELOW NEW ORLEANS, APRIL 25, 1862

don't do their duty. Give that rascally little tug a shot, and don't let her go off with a whole coat." But the tug did get away, after all; and no one can feel sorry that men plucky enough to take an unarmed tug into a terrible fight of frigates and ironclads should escape with their lives. The men on the "Hartford" fought the flames with hose and buckets, and at last got rid of their dangerous neighbor. Then they saw a steamer crowded with men rushing toward the flag-ship without firing a shot, and evidently intending to board. Capt. Broome, with a crew of marines, was working a bow-gun on the "Hartford." Carefully he trained the huge piece upon the approaching steamer. He stepped back, stooped for a last glance along the sights, then with a quick pull of the lanyard the great gun went off with a roar, followed instantly by a louder explosion from the attacking steamer. When the smoke cleared away, all looked eagerly for the enemy; but she had vanished as if by magic. That single shot, striking her magazine, had blown her up with all on board.

Much of the hardest fighting was done by the smaller vessels on either side. The little Confederate "cotton-clad" "Governor Moore" made a desperate fight, dashing through the Union fleet, taking and giving broadsides in every direction. The Union vessel "Varuna" also did daring work, and naturally these two ships met in desperate conflict. After exchanging broadsides, the "Governor Moore" rammed her adversary, and, while bearing down on her, received a severe raking fire from the "Varuna." The "Governor Moore" was in such a position that none of her guns could be brought to bear; but her captain suddenly depressed the muzzle of his bow-gun, and sent a shot crashing through *his own* deck and side, and deep into the hull of the "Varuna." The vessels soon parted, but the "Varuna" had received her death-wound, and sank in shallow water. The "Governor Moore" kept on her way, but was knocked to pieces by the fire from the heavy guns of the frigates shortly after.

And so the battle raged for five hours. To recount in full the deeds of valor done, would be to tell the story of each ship engaged, and would require volumes. Witnesses who saw the fight from the start were deeply impressed by the majesty of the scene. It was like a grand panorama. "From almost perfect silence, — the steamers moving through the water like phantom ships, — one incessant roar of heavy cannon commenced, the Confederate forts and gunboats opening together on the head of our

line as it came within range. The Union vessels returned the fire as they came up, and soon the hundred and seventy guns of our fleet joined in the thunder which seemed to shake the very earth. A lurid glare was thrown over the scene by the burning rafts; and, as the bombshells crossed each other and exploded in the air, it seemed as if a battle were taking place in the heavens as well as on the earth. It all ended as suddenly as it commenced."

While this gigantic contest was going on in the river abreast of the forts, the people of New Orleans were thronging the streets, listening to the unceasing roar of the great guns, and discussing, with pale faces and anxious hearts, the outcome of the fight. "Farragut can never pass our forts. His wooden ships will be blown to pieces by their fire, or dashed into atoms by the 'Manassas,'" people said. But many listened in silence: they had husbands, sons, or brothers in that fearful fight, and who could tell that they would return alive? By and by the firing ceased. Only an occasional shot broke the stillness of the morning. Then came the suspense. Had the fleet been beaten back, or was it above the forts, and even now sullenly steaming up to the city? Everybody rushed for the housetops to look to the southward, over the low land through which the Mississippi winds. An hour's waiting, and they see curls of smoke rising above the trees, then slender dark lines moving along above the treetops. "Are they our ships?" every one cries; and no one answers until the dark lines are seen to be crossed by others at right angles. They are masts with yard-arms, masts of sea-going vessels, the masts of the invader's fleet. A cry of grief, of fear, of rage, goes up from the housetops. "To the levee!" cry the men, and soon the streets resound with the rush of many feet toward the river. "The river is crooked, and its current swift. It will be hours before the Yankees can arrive: let us burn, destroy, that they may find no booty." Let one who was in the sorrowful city that terrible April day tell the story. "I went to the river-side. There, until far into the night, I saw hundreds of drays carrying cotton out of the presses and yards to the wharves, where it was fired. The glare of those sinuous miles of flame set men and women weeping and wailing thirty miles away, on the farther shore of Lake Pontchartrain. But the next day was the day of terrors. During the night, fear, wrath, and sense of betrayal, had run through the people as the fire had run through the cotton. You have seen, perhaps, a family fleeing, with lamentations and

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FARRAGUT'S FLEET ENGAGING THE ENEMY NEAR NEW ORLEANS, APRIL 26, 1862

wringing of hands, out of a burning house; multiply it by thousands upon thousands: that was New Orleans, though the houses were not burning. The firemen were out; but they cast fire on the waters, putting the torch to the empty ships and cutting them loose to float down the river.

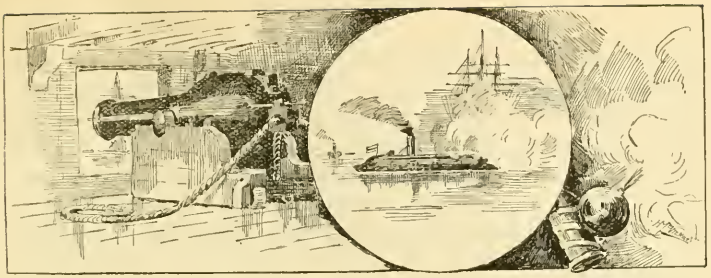
"Whoever could go was going. The great mass that had no place to go to, or means to go with, was beside itself. 'Betrayed! betrayed!' it cried, and ran in throngs from street to street, seeking some vent, some victim for its wrath. I saw a crowd catch a poor fellow at the corner of Magazine and Common Streets, whose crime was that he looked like a stranger and might be a spy. He was the palest living man I ever saw. They swung him to a neighboring lamp-post; but the Foreign Legion was patroling the town in strong squads, and one of its lieutenants, all green and gold, leaped with drawn sword, cut the rope, and saved the man. This was one occurrence; there were many like it. I stood in the rear door of our store, Canal Street, soon after re-opening it. The junior of the firm was within. I called him to look toward the river. The masts of the cutter 'Washington' were slowly tipping, declining, sinking — down she went. The gunboat moored next her began to smoke all over and then to blaze. My employers lifted up their heels and left the city, left their goods and their affairs in the hands of one mere lad — no stranger would have thought I had reached fourteen — and one big German porter. I closed the doors, sent the porter to his place in the Foreign Legion, and ran to the levee to see the sights.

"What a gathering! — the riff-raff of the wharves, the town, the gutters. Such women! such wrecks of women! and all the juvenile rag-tag. The lower steamboat-landing, well covered with sugar, rice, and molasses, was being rifled. The men smashed; the women scooped up the smashings. The river was overflowing the top of the levee. A rain-storm began to threaten. 'Are the Yankee ships in sight?' I asked of an idler. He pointed out the tops of their naked masts as they showed up across the huge bend of the river. They were engaging the batteries at Camp Chalmette, the old field of Jackson's renown. Presently that was over. Ah, me! I see them now as they come slowly round Slaughterhouse Point, into full view: silent, so grim and terrible, black with men, heavy with deadly portent, the long banished stars and stripes flying against the frowning sky. Oh for the 'Mississippi,' the 'Mississippi!' Just then

she came down upon them. But how? Drifting helplessly, a mass of flames.

"The crowds on the levee howled and screamed with rage. The swarming decks answered never a word; but one old tar on the 'Hartford,' standing with lanyard in hand, beside a great pivot-gun, so plain to view that you could see him smile, silently patted its big black breech and blandly grinned."

As the masts of the fleet came up the river, a young man stepped out upon the roof of the City Hall, and swiftly hoisted the flag of the State of Louisiana. When the ships came up, two officers were sent ashore to demand the surrender of the city; and shoulder to shoulder the two old sailors marched through a howling, cursing mob to the City Hall. The mayor refused to surrender the city, saying that Farragut already had captured it. The officers went back to their ships, and the flag still floated. Two days later the officers, with a hundred sailors and marines, returned and demanded that the flag be hauled down. No one in the city would tear it down, and the Federals went up to the roof to lower it themselves. The street and surrounding housetops were crowded with a hostile people, all armed. No one could tell that the fall of the flag would not be followed by a volley from the undisciplined populace. The marines in front of the building stood grouped about two loaded howitzers that bore upon the darkly muttering crowd. Violence was in the air. As the two officers rose to go to the roof, the mayor, a young Creole, left the room and descended the stairs. Quietly he stepped out into the street, and without a word stood before one of the howitzers, his arms folded, eying the gunner, who stood with lanyard in hand, ready to fire at the word of command. The flag fell slowly from the staff. Not a sound arose from the crowd. All were watching the mayor, who stood coldly looking on death. The Federal officers came down carrying the flag. A few sharp commands, and the marines tramped away down the street, with the howitzers clanking behind them. The crowd cheered for Mayor Monroe and dispersed, and New Orleans became again a city of the United States.



## CHAPTER XIV.

ALONG THE MISSISSIPPI — FORTS JACKSON AND ST. PHILIP SURRENDER. — THE BATTLE AT ST. CHARLES. — THE RAM "ARKANSAS." — BOMBARDMENT AND CAPTURE OF PORT HUDSON.

WHILE New Orleans was thus excited over the capture of the city, the soldiers in the forts below were debating as to the course they should adopt. They had not surrendered; and although the great bastions were pounded out of shape by the heavy guns of the fleet, yet they were still formidable defences, giving perfect security to the men in the bomb-proofs. But their case was hopeless: for Farragut was at New Orleans, and could cut off their supplies; while Porter, with his mortar-boats, was below them, putting escape out of the question. Every now and then a big shell would drop on the parade, and its flying pieces would remind the garrison that their enemies were getting impatient. After waiting a day or two, Porter sent a lieutenant with a flag of truce to the fort, calling upon the Confederate commander to surrender the two forts and the shattered remnant of the Confederate navy. He complimented the Confederates upon their gallant defence, but warned them, that, should they refuse to surrender, he would recommence his bombardment with new vigor. The Confederates refused to surrender until they heard from New Orleans; and the next day the monotonous thunder of the heavy mortars began again, and

again the heavy shells began falling thick and fast upon the forts. Wearily the gray-coated soldiers settled down to continue what they felt must be a useless defence. The officers did their best to inspirit the men; but all knew that a surrender must come before long and at last the men mutinously left their guns, and said they would fight no longer. They had borne without flinching a terrible bombardment, and now they felt that to fight longer would be a foolish sacrifice of life. Many left the forts, and plunged into the woods to escape the terrible shells. Gen. Duncan saw that all was lost, and on the night of the 28th of April sent an officer to the fleet announcing the surrender. On the following day Porter proceeded up-stream with his squadron, and anchored off the fort. A boat, manned by six trim sailors in dress uniforms, put off, and soon returned, bringing the commander of the defeated forces and two or three officers. They were received on the "Harriet Lane," and Commodore Porter had made great preparations for the meeting. The crews of all the vessels were dressed in snow-white mustering-suits, and the officers in brass-buttoned blue coats and white trousers. The decks were scrubbed, and all traces of the fight cleared away. As the Confederate officers came up to the fleet, one of them, a former lieutenant in the Union navy, said, "Look at the old navy. I feel proud when I see them. There are no half-breeds there: they are the simon-pure." As the Confederates came over the side, Porter stood, with his officers, ready to receive them. The greatest politeness was observed on either side; and Porter writes, "Their bearing was that of men who had gained a victory, instead of undergoing defeat." While the papers of capitulation were being signed, a message came from the deck that the huge Confederate ironclad "Louisiana" was drifting down upon them, a mass of flames, and there was great danger that she would blow up in the midst of the Union fleet. "This is sharp practice, gentlemen," said Porter, "and some of us will perhaps be blown up; but I know what to do If you can stand what is coming, we can; but I will make it lively for those people if anybody in the flotilla is injured."

"I told Lieut. Wainwright to hail the steamer next him," writes Capt. Porter, "and tell her captain to pass the word for the others to veer out all their riding-chains to the bitter end, and stand by to sheer clear of the burning ironclad as she drifted down. I then sat down to the table, and said, 'Gentlemen, we will proceed to sign the capitulation.' I handed the paper

to Gen. Duncan, and looked at the Confederate officers to see how they would behave under the circumstances of a great ironclad dropping down on them, all in flames, with twenty thousand pounds of powder in her magazines. For myself, I hoped the fire would not reach the powder until the ship had drifted some distance below us. My greatest fear was that she would run foul of some of the steamers.

"While I was thinking this over, the officers were sitting as coolly as if at tea-table among their friends.

"Just then there was a stir on deck, a kind of swaying of the vessel to and fro, a rumbling in the air, then an explosion which seemed to shake the heavens. The 'Harriet Lane' was thrown two streaks over, and every thing in the cabin was jostled from side to side; but not a man left his seat, or showed any intention of doing so.

"I was glad that I had signed before the explosion took place, as I would not have liked to have my autograph look shaky."

The destruction of the "Louisiana" was a bit of trickery on the part of the Confederate naval officers, which Farragut punished by sending them North as close prisoners, while the army officers were granted freedom under parol. So ended the Confederate control over the mouth of the Mississippi; and Porter, after waiting long enough to see a blue-coat garrison in Forts St. Philip and Jackson, started up the river to rejoin his chief in New Orleans.

But, on reaching the city, he found that the energetic admiral had already started out to clear the river of the Confederate batteries that lined it on either side as far up as Vicksburg. This was a service of no little danger, and one bringing but little satisfaction; for no sooner had the gunboats left one point, from which by hard firing they had driven the Confederates, than the latter would return in force, build up again their shattered earthworks, mount new guns, and be once more ready for battle. But more powerful than these little one or two gun-batteries were the Confederate works at Port Hudson, the destruction of which was absolutely necessary for further Union successes on the great river. Between Port Hudson and Vicksburg, the river was completely under the control of the Confederates; and it was a powerful gunboat that could hope to navigate that stretch of water unharmed. Farragut determined to attack Port Hudson, and set the 14th of March, 1863, as the date for the action.

Port Hudson batteries were perched on a high bluff that overlooks one of those abrupt curves around which the current of the Mississippi River sweeps with such terrific force. The heavy guns bore down upon a point at which the ships would almost inevitably be swept out of their course by the swift stream, and where the river was filled with treacherous shifting shoals. Naval officers all agreed that to pass those batteries was a more difficult task than had been the passage of the forts below New Orleans; yet Farragut, eager to get at the stronghold of the foe in Vicksburg, determined to make the attempt. The mortar-vessels were stationed below to drive the enemy from his guns with well-directed bombs; while the fleet, led by the stanch old "Hartford," should make a bold dash up the river.

Night fell upon the scene; and the ships weighed anchor, and started upon their perilous voyage. To the side of each man-of-war was bound a gunboat to tow the great vessel out of danger in case of disaster. Silently the long string of vessels swept upward towards the batteries; but, as the "Hartford" came into range, the watchful Confederates gave the alarm, and the nearest battery at once opened fire. Then from Porter's mortar-schooners far down the river came an answering roar; and, as ship after ship came up into range, she opened with shot and shell upon the works. On the dark river-banks great alarm fires were kindled, lighting up the water with a lurid glare, and making the ships clearly visible to the Confederate gunners. But soon the smoke of battle settled down over all; and gunners, whether on shore or on the ships, fired at random. The "Hartford" led the way, and picked out the course; and the other vessels followed carefully in her wake. In the mizzen-top of the flag-ship was stationed a cool old river pilot, who had guided many a huge river steamer, freighted with precious lives, through the mazy channels of the Mississippi. There, high above the battle-smoke, heedless of the grape-shot and bits of flying shell whistling around him, he stood at his post, calmly giving his orders through a speaking-tube that led to the wheel-room. Now and then the admiral on the deck below would call up, asking about the pilot's safety, and was always answered with a cheery hail. But though the "Hartford" went by the batteries, heedless of the storm and lead poured upon her, she found herself alone, when, after firing a last gun, she swept into the clear air and tranquil water out of range of the enemy's guns. She waited some time for the other ships to come up, while all on board watched eagerly,

save those who lay moaning on the surgeon's tables in the cockpit below. The night wore on, and all on board were consumed with anxiety for the fate of the vessels that had dropped behind. The lookout in the tops reported that he could see far down the river a bright red light that could only be caused by a burning vessel. It proved to be the steamer "Mississippi," that had grounded under the guns of the batteries, and had been fired and abandoned by her crew. But of this the admiral knew nothing; and when, after an hour or two, he heard the dull, heavy boom of an explosion, he went sadly to his cabin, fearing that the lives of many valiant sailors had been sacrificed. There was no way to communicate with the fleet below, and it was not until days afterward that the admiral learned how his fleet had been beaten back by the heavy guns of the Confederates and the swift current of the river. The "Richmond" grounded at a point within easy range of the batteries, and her crew fought desperately while shell after shell went crashing through her hull. They saw the other vessels of the fleet go drifting by helpless in the mighty current of the river, but they faltered not in their brave defence until they saw their ship a wreck and in flames. Then leaving their dead comrades with the "Richmond" for a funeral pyre, they escaped to the shore, and threaded their way through miles of morasses and dense thickets until they came to the mortar-boats, where they found refuge and rest. And so that first attack on Port Hudson ended with Farragut above the batteries, and his ships below. It had only served to prove, that, safe in their heavy earthworks, the Confederates could defy any attack by ships alone. This fact was clear to the Union authorities, and they began massing troops about the hostile works. Two months later, Porter's mortar-boats, the frigates and gunboats, and the batteries and muskets of an immense body of troops, opened on the works. While the heavy fire was being kept up, the Union armies were closing in, digging trenches, and surrounding the Confederates on all sides. The firing came to be short-range work and very deadly. "To show you what cool and desperate fighting it was," says a Confederate, "I had at least twenty-five shots at Federals not two hundred feet away. In one instance I fired upon a lieutenant who was urging on his men. I wounded him in his left arm. He fired at me with his revolver, and sent a bullet through my cap. Next time I hit him in the hip, and he fell; but, while I was reloading, he raised himself up, and shot the man next to me through the head. The officer

was so close to me that I could tell the color of his eyes, and detect a small scar on his face."

This sort of work continued for weeks, with occasional charges by the Federals. Farragut's fleet kept up its bombardment, but did little damage. One of the Confederate soldiers said, some time after the war, "One can get used to almost any thing. After the first two or three days, we took the bombardment as part of the regular routine. Pieces of shell were continually flying about, and it was the regular thing for a bomb to drop down among us at intervals. I have seen them come down within fifty feet of a sentinel, and throw up a wagon-load of dirt, without his even turning his head. We had but few men hurt by the artillery-fire. I do not believe we averaged one man hit for every thousand pounds of metal thrown. I remember that one day I counted thirteen shells and bombs hurled at the spot where I was posted before we had a man hurt, and he was only slightly wounded." Naturally, such work as this could not drive the Confederates from their trenches; and the fleet soon concluded to leave the army to capture Port Hudson, while the ships steamed on up the river toward Vicksburg. The army kept up the siege for weeks, until the Confederates, hearing of the fall of Vicksburg, surrendered.

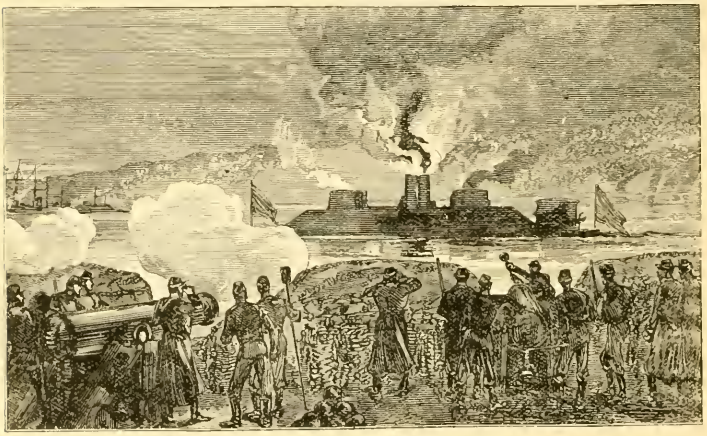
While the Union fleet was thus fighting its way up to Vicksburg, the Confederates were working away at a great ram that they were building in a secluded spot far up the Yazoo River. Work on the ram was being pushed with the greatest energy; and the Union sailors, in their ships on the Mississippi, listened daily to the stories of escaping negroes, and wondered when the big ship would come down and give them a tussle. The crew of the ram were no less impatient for the fray; for they were tired of being hidden away up a little river, plagued by mosquitoes and gnats. The dark shades of the heavy forests were seldom brightened by a ray of sun. The stream was full of alligators, that lay lazily on the banks all day, and bellowed dismally all night. The chirp of a bird was rarely heard. In its place were the discordant screams of cranes, or hisses of the moccasins or cotton-mouths. When at last the carpenters' clatter had ceased, and the ram, ready for action, lay in the little river, the crew were mustered on the deck, and told that the new boat had been built to clear the Union vessels from the Mississippi, and that purpose should be carried out. No white flag was to flutter from that flag-staff; and she should sink

with all her crew before she would surrender. Any sailor who feared to enter upon such a service might leave the ship at once. No one left; and the "Arkansas" started down the river to look for an enemy. She was not long in finding one. At the mouth of the Yazoo floated three Union gunboats, — the "Carondelet," the "Tyler," and the "Queen of the West." As the ram came down into sight, her men heard the roll of the drums on the decks of the hostile vessels. The gunboats quickly opened fire, which was as promptly returned by the "Arkansas;" and, as she came swiftly rushing down the stream, the three vessels fled before her. The men on the ram were all new recruits, and made awkward work of the firing; but as she came to close quarters she sent her shells crashing into the Union ships, while the shot she received in return rattled harmlessly off her steel-mailed sides. The "Carondelet" was the first vessel to come to grief. She had hardly fired four shots when a heavy solid shot crashed through her side, and rattled against the most delicate part of the engine. She was helpless at once; and hardly had this damage been reported when a second shot came with a burst into an open port, killed five men, and broke its way out the other side. In ten minutes her decks were slippery with blood, and thick strewn with wounded and dead men. The current of the river drifted her upon a sandbar; and she lay there helplessly, now and again answering the galling fire of her foe with a feeble shot. Pouring in a last broadside, the "Arkansas" steamed past her, and, disregarding the other two vessels, headed for Vicksburg, where she knew her aid was sorely needed.

The news of her coming preceded her; and, when she came within sight of the steeples of the city, at least ten thousand people were watching her progress, and wondering whether she could pass by the Federal batteries and through the Federal fleet. The Federal fleet was all ready for her, and prepared such a gauntlet for the "Arkansas" as had never been run by any vessel. As she came within range, every Union gun that could be brought to bear opened; and shot and shell rained from shore-batteries and marine guns upon the tough hide of the ram. As she sped by the vessels, they gave her their broadsides, and the effect was tremendous. As the huge iron balls struck the ship, she keeled far over; and to her crew inside, it seemed as though she was being lifted bodily out of the water. Not a shot broke through the armor; but the terrible concussions knocked men down, and

made blood come pouring from their nostrils. For new men, her crew fought well and bravely; though two fell flat on their faces, afraid to lift their heads, lest they be taken off by a shell.

When it was seen that the "Arkansas" was likely to pass through the lines unscathed, the Federals tried to blockade her way; but she deviated not an inch from her path. The vessel that stood before her had to move aside, or take the chances of a blow from her terrible iron beak. She came straight to the centre of the fleet before opening fire; and when her port-holes were opened, and the big guns peered out, they found plenty of tar-



THE "ARKANSAS" UNDER FIRE.

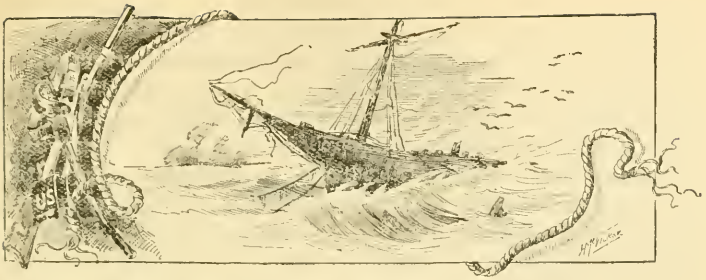
gets. Her first volley knocked a gunboat to pieces; and in another minute she had crashed into the side of a Union ram, sending that unlucky craft ashore for repairs. But the storm of solid shot was too much for her; and she was forced to seek shelter under the bluffs, where the heavy guns of the Confederate shore-batteries compelled the Union ships to keep a respectful distance. Here she lay for several weeks, beating off every assault of the Federals, and making a valuable addition to the defences of the city. But, in an evil hour, the Confederate authorities decided to send her down the river to recapture Baton Rouge. When her journey was but half completed

she was pounced upon by several United States vessels, with the "Essex" in the lead. Her engines breaking down, she drifted upon a sand-bank; and the attacking ships pounded her at their leisure, until, with the fire bursting from her port-holes, she was abandoned by her crew, and blazed away until her career was ended by the explosion of her magazine. She had given the Federal fleet some hard tussles, but beyond that had done nothing of the work the Confederates so fondly hoped of her.

While the flotilla of gunboats, led by the "Essex," were planning for the destruction of the "Arkansas," a small naval expedition, consisting of three gunboats, was threading its way up the narrow channel of the White River in search of some Confederate batteries said to be on the banks. Within twelve hours from the start, the sailors learned from a ragged negro, whom they captured on the shore, that the Confederates had powerful batteries only five miles farther up, and that the river channel was obstructed by sunken vessels. Anchor was cast for the night; and in the morning the troops accompanying the expedition were landed, and plunged into the forest with the plan of taking the fort by a rush from the rear. The gunboats began a slow advance up the river, throwing shells into the woods ahead of them. The blue-jackets kept carefully under cover; for, though they could see no foe, yet the constant singing of rifle-bullets about the ships proved that somewhere in those bushes were concealed sharp-shooters whose powder was good and whose aim was true. The "Mound City" was leading the gunboats, and had advanced within six hundred yards of the enemy's guns, when a single shot, fired from a masked battery high up the bluffs, rang out sharply amid the rattle of small-arms. It was the first cannon-shot fired by the Confederates in that engagement, and it was probably the most horribly deadly shot fired in the war. It entered the port-casemate forward, killed three men standing at the gun, and plunged into the boiler. In an instant the scalding steam came hissing out, filling the ship from stem to stern, and horribly scalding every one upon the gun-deck. The deck was covered with writhing forms, and screams of agony rang out above the harsh noise of the escaping steam and the roar of battle outside. Many were blown overboard; more crawled out of the port-holes, and dropped into the river to escape the scalding steam, and struggling in the water were killed by rifle-balls or the fragments of the shells that were bursting all around. The helpless gunboat turned round and round

in the stream, and drifted away, carrying a crew of dead and dying men. So great was the horror of the scene, that one of the officers, himself unhurt, who saw his comrades thus tortured all about him, went insane.

While this scene was going on before the fort, the Union troops had come up behind it, and with a cheer rushed over the breastworks, and drove the garrison to surrender. The Confederate banner fell from the staff, and the stars and stripes went up in its place. But how great was the price that the Federals had to pay for that victory! That night, with muffled drums, and arms reversed, the blue-jackets carried to the grave fifty-nine of their comrades, who twelve hours before were active men. With three volleys of musketry the simple rites over the sailors' graves were ended; and those who were left alive, only said with a sigh, "It is the fortune of war."



## CHAPTER XV.

ON TO VICKSBURG. — BOMBARDMENT OF THE CONFEDERATE STRONGHOLD. — PORTER'S CRUISE IN THE FORESTS.

WHILE the smaller gunboats were thus making dashes into the enemy's country, destroying batteries and unfinished war-vessels, and burning salt-works, the heavier vessels of the fleet were being massed about Vicksburg, and were preparing to aid the army in reducing that city to subjection. We need not describe the way in which Gen. Grant had been rushing his troops toward that point, how for weeks his engineers had been planning trenches and approaches to the Confederate works, until toward the middle part of June, 1863, the people in that city found themselves hemmed in by a huge girdle of trenches, batteries, and military camps. Gen. Pemberton, with his army of Confederate soldiers, had been forced backward from point after point, until at last he found himself in Vicksburg, with the prospect of a long siege before him, and no way to get past the inexorable lines of blue that surrounded him. It is true that he had a wonderfully strong position, and many were the tongues that said Vicksburg could never be taken. But though stronger than Sebastopol, stronger than the Rock of Gibraltar, Vicksburg was destined to fall before that mighty army that encircled it, and was slowly starving the city into subjection.

But the Union soldiers, looking from their camps toward the Confederate citadel, saw that they had before them some severe work before that flag that flaunted over the city should be replaced by the stars and stripes. The city stands on a towering bluff high above the eastern bank of the Mississippi River. On that frowning height the busy hands of Pemberton's soldiers had reared mighty batteries, that commanded the Mississippi for miles up and down stream. To think of carrying the works by assault, was madness. Sherman had tried, and was beaten back with terrible loss. Then Grant, with nearly twenty thousand men, and with the co-operation of the river-flotilla, came upon the stage, and determined to take the city though it kept him at bay for months.

All imaginable plans were tried to get the army below the city; for Grant's command had come down from Cairo, and were at the northern and most impregnable side of the enemy's works. As at Island No. 10, a sharp bend in the river made a long peninsula right under the Confederates' guns. Grant, remembering the plan adopted before, set to work to cut a canal through the peninsula, so that the gunboats and transports might get below the forts. Twelve hundred negroes worked with a will upon this ditch for weeks. Then came a terrible rain-storm: the swollen, muddy torrent of the river broke in upon the unfinished canal, and that work was wasted. Then a new plan was suggested, this time by Commodore David Porter, who all through the war showed the greatest delight in taking his big gunboats into ditches where nothing larger than a frog or musk-rat could hope to navigate, and then bringing them out again safe after all.

The country back of Vicksburg was fairly honeycombed with shallow lakes, creeks, and those sluggish black streams called in the South bayous. Porter had been looking over this aqueous territory for some time, and had sent one of his lieutenants off in a steam-launch to see what could be done in that network of ditches. When the explorer returned, he brought cheering news. He was confident that, with tugs and gangs of axemen clearing the way, the gunboats could be taken up the Yazoo River, then into a wide bayou, and finally through a maze of small water-ways, until they should reach the Mississippi again below the Vicksburg batteries. Then the transports could follow, the troops could march down the other side of the river, be met by the transports, ferried across, and take Vicksburg

on the flank. It was a beautiful plan; and Porter went to Grant with it, full of enthusiasm.

Gen. Grant considered the matter for some time, but finally gave his consent, and detailed a number of blue-coated soldiers to aid Porter's blue-jackets in the work. They first cut the levees, and let the mighty tide of the Mississippi sweep in, filling the bayous to the brim, and flooding all the country round about. Then the gunboats plunged in, and were borne along on the rushing tide until they brought up, all standing, against the trunks of trees, or had their smoke-stacks caught by overhanging branches.

Then came the tug of war; and the axemen were called to the front, and set to work. They chopped their way along for some distance; the rapid current from the river banging the vessels against the trees and stumps, until all the standing rigging and light cabins were swept away. After a good deal of work they saw before them a broad river, wide enough for two vessels to steam abreast. Soon they drifted out into it, and the commanding officer sang out cheerily, "On to Vicksburg, boys, and no more trees to saw." And so they steamed on, thinking how neatly they should take the "gray-coats" in the rear, when suddenly a bend in the river showed them, just ahead, a fort in the middle of the river, with the channel blocked on either side. That was a surprise. The works were new, and the water was still muddy about the sunken steamers. Clearly the wily Pemberton had heard of this inland naval expedition, and was determined to check it effectually.

The gunboats backed water, and crowded in confused groups. The gunners in the fort took hurried aim, and pulled the lanyards of their cannon, forgetting that those pieces were not loaded. It was hard to tell which party was the more excited at the unexpected meeting. This gave the blue-jackets a chance to collect their thoughts, and in a minute or two the gunboats opened fire; but they were soon convinced that the fort was too much for them, and they turned and crawled back through the woods to the fleet above Vicksburg. Pemberton scored one point for successful strategy.

But, even while this expedition was working its way back to the station of the vessels on the Mississippi, Porter was starting another through a second chain of water-courses that he had discovered. This time he was so sure of getting into the rear of Vicksburg, that he took four of his big

iron-clads, and two light mortar-boats built especially for work in the woods. Gen. Sherman, with a strong army-force, marched overland, keeping up with the gunboats. Admiral Porter, in his Memoirs, gives a graphic picture of this expedition. Back of Vicksburg the country is low, and intersected in every direction by narrow, tortuous bayous, lined on either side by gloomy morasses or majestic forests. Into these little-known water-courses Porter boldly led his ponderous iron-clads; while Sherman, with a detachment of troops, advanced along the shore, keeping as near the flotilla as possible. Seldom have naval vessels been detailed upon so strange a service. For days they steamed on under the spreading branches of trees, that often spanned the bayous in a mighty arch overhead, shutting out all sunlight. For a time this navigation of placid, shady water-ways was pleasant enough; but, as they penetrated farther into the interior, the jackies sighed for the blue waters of the ocean, or even for the turbid current of the Mississippi. The heavy foliage that gave so grateful a shade also harbored all sorts of animals; and coons, rats, mice, and wildcats, that had been driven to the trees for shelter during the prevailing high water, peered down upon the sailors, and often dropped sociably down upon the decks of the vessels gliding beneath.

At some portions of the voyage the flotilla seemed to be steaming through the primeval forest. The bayou was but a few feet wider than the gunboats, and its banks were lined by gnarled and knotted old veterans of the forest, — live oaks, sycamore, and tupelo gum trees that had stood in majestic dignity on the banks of the dark and sullen stream for centuries. Sometimes majestic vistas would open; broad avenues carpeted with velvet turf, and walled in by the massive tree trunks, extending from the banks of the stream far back into the country. Again, the stately forests would be replaced by fields of waving corn or rice, with the tops of a row of negro cabins or the columned front of a planter's house showing in the distance. Then, as the flotilla steamed on, this fair prospect would disappear, and be replaced by noisome cypress brakes, hung thick with the funereal Spanish moss, and harboring beneath the black water many a noxious reptile.

So through the ever-changing scenery the gunboats moved along, making but little progress, but meeting with no serious obstacle, until one morning there appeared on a bit of high ground, some yards in

advance of the leading gunboat, an army officer mounted on an old white horse. It was Gen. Sherman, and his troops were in camp near by. He greeted the naval forces cheerily, and, rallying Porter on the amphibious service into which his gunboats had been forced, warned him that he would soon have not a smoke-stack standing, nor a boat left at the davits.

"So much the better," said the undaunted admiral. "All I want is an engine, guns, and a hull to float them. As to boats, they are very much in the way."

A short time only was spent in consultation, and then Sherman with his forces left the bayou and plunged into the interior, first warning Porter that he would have a hard time getting any farther, even if the enemy did not come down and surround him. But Porter was not the man to abandon the advance, so long as there was water enough to float his gunboats. Besides, he had gained some ideas regarding navigation in the forests, that enabled him to move his fleet forward with more celerity than at first. When a tree blocked the course of the iron-clads, they no longer stopped to clear it away by work with the axes; but clapping on all steam, the powerful rams dashed at the woody obstruction, and with repeated blows soon knocked it out of the way.

Soon after leaving Sherman, Porter saw that the difficulties he had thus far met and conquered were as nothing to those which he had yet to encounter. The comparatively broad stream up which he had been steaming came to an end, and his further progress must be through Cypress Bayou, a canal just forty-six feet wide. The broadest gunboat was forty-two feet wide, and to enter that narrow stream made retreat out of the question: there could be no turning round to fly. The levees rose on either side of the narrow canal high above the decks of the iron-clads, so that the cannon could not be sufficiently elevated to do effective work in case of an attack. But there were nine feet of water in the great ditch; and that was enough for Porter, who pressed boldly on.

The country into which the combined military and naval expedition was advancing was in truth the granary of Vicksburg. On all other sides of the beleaguered city, the Federal lines were drawn so closely that the wagons laden with farm produce could not hope to pass. But here, back of the city, and far from the camps of Grant's legions, the work of raising produce for the gallant people of Vicksburg was prosecuted

with the most untiring vigor. The sight, then, of the advancing gunboats aroused the greatest consternation. From the deck of his vessel Porter could see the people striving to save their property from the advancing enemy. Great droves of cattle were being driven away far into the interior; negroes were skurrying in all directions, driving poultry and pigs to the safe concealment of the forest; wagons groaning under the weight of farm and garden produce could be seen disappearing in the distance. What the inhabitants could not save they destroyed, in order that it might not profit the invaders. A short distance from the mouth of the bayou were six thousand bales of cotton piled up on opposite sides of the stream, ready to be taken aboard a steamer when the war should end. As the gunboats advanced slowly, making little headway against the two-knot current of the bayou, Porter saw two men, carrying lighted pine-knots, dash up to the cotton, and begin to set it afire. The admiral looked on in disgust. "'What fools these mortals be!'" said he to an officer standing at his side; "but I suppose those men have a right to burn their own cotton, especially as we have no way of preventing them."

"I can send a howitzer shell at them, sir," said the officer, "and drive them away."

But to this Porter demurred, saying that he had no desire to kill the men, and that they might do as they liked with their own. Accordingly the officers quietly watched the vandals, until, after twenty minutes' work, the cotton was blazing, and a dense mass of smoke cut off all vision ahead, and rose high in the air. Then Porter began to suspect that he had made a mistake. The difficulties of navigation in the bayou were great enough, without having smoke and fire added to them. Yet to wait for the cotton to burn up might cause a serious delay. On the high bank of the bayou stood a negro begging the sailors to take him aboard.

"Hallo, there, Sambo!" sung out Porter, "how long will it take this cotton to burn up?"

"Two day, massa," responded the contraband; "p'raps tree."

That ended the debate. "Ring the bell to go ahead fast," said the admiral to the pilot; and away went the flotilla at full speed, plunging into the smoke and fire. It was a hot experience for the sailors. The

heavy iron-clads made but slow progress, and were scorched and blistered with the heat. The ports were all shut down, and the crews called to fire-quarters, buckets in hand. To remain on deck, was impossible. Porter and his captain made the trial, but had hardly entered the smoke when the scorching heat drove both into the shelter of an iron-covered deck-house. The pilot standing at the wheel seized a flag, and, wrapping it about his face and body,. was able to stay at his post. As the flames grew hotter, the sailors below opened the main hatch, and, thrusting up a hose, deluged the deck with floods of water. So, without a man in sight, the huge iron ship moved along between the walls of flame. Suddenly came an enormous crash. The gunboat shivered, and for a moment stood still; then, gathering headway, moved on again, though with much ominous grating beneath her keel. Soon after she passed out of the smoke and heat, and all hands rushed on deck for a whiff of the fresh, cool air. Their first thought was of the cause of the collision; and, looking eagerly astern, they saw a heavy bridge, about fifty feet of which had been demolished by the tremendous power of the ram. This gave Porter a hint as to the force he had at his command; and thereafter bridges were rammed as a matter of course whenever they impeded the progress of the iron-clads. The astonishment of the people along the shore may well be imagined.

The great and formidable obstacles that stood in the path of the squadron were, as a rule, overcome by the exertion of the great powers of the steam-driven, iron-plated vessels; but at last there came a check, that, though it seemed at first insignificant, terminated the sylvan manœuvres of the iron-clad navy. After running the gantlet of the burning cotton, butting down trees, and smashing through bridges, the column entered a stretch of smooth water that seemed to promise fair and unobstructed sailing. But toward the end of this expanse of water a kind of green scum was evident, extending right across the bayou, from bank to bank. Porter's keen eye caught sight of this; and, turning to one of the negroes who had taken refuge on the gunboat, he asked what it was. "It's nuffin' but willows, sah," he replied. "When de water's out of de bayou, den we cuts de willows to make baskets with. You kin go troo dat like a eel."

Satisfied with this explanation, the admiral ordered the tug which

led the column to go ahead. Under a full head of steam, the tug dashed into the willows, but began to slow up, until, after going about thirty yards, she stopped, unable to go forward or back. Undaunted by this unexpected resistance, Porter cried out that the "Cincinnati" would push the tug along; and the heavy gunboat, withdrawing a short distance to gain headway, hurled herself forward, and dashed into the willows with a force that would have carried her through any bridge ever built. But the old fable of the lion bound down by the silken net was here re-enacted. The gunboat did not even reach the tug. The slender willow-shoots trailed along the sides, caught in the rough ends of the iron overhang, and held the vessel immovable. Abandoning the attempt to advance, the gunboat strove to back out, but to no avail. Then hooks were rigged over the side to break away the withes, and men slung in ropes alongside vigorously wielded sharp cutlasses and saws; but still the willows retained their grip. Matters were now getting serious; and, to add to Porter's perplexity, reports came in that Confederate troops were coming down upon him. Then he began to lose confidence in his iron clads, and wish right heartily for Sherman and his soldiers, of whose whereabouts he could gain no knowledge. The enemy did not leave him long in doubts as to their intention, and soon began a vigorous fire of shells from the woods. Porter stopped that promptly by manning his mortars and firing a few shells at a range measured by the sound of the enemy's cannon. The immediate silence of the hostile batteries proved the accuracy of the admiral's calculations, and gave him time to devise means for escaping from his perilous position.

How to do it without aid from Sherman's troops, was a difficult question; and in his perplexity he exclaimed aloud, "Why don't Sherman come on? I'd give ten dollars to get a telegram to him." The admiral was standing at the moment on the bank of the bayou, near a group of negroes; and an athletic-looking contraband stepped forward, and, announcing himself as a "telegram-wire," offered to carry the note "to kingdum kum for half a dollar." After sharply cross-questioning the volunteer, Porter wrote on a scrap of paper, "DEAR SHERMAN, — Hurry up, for Heaven's sake. I never knew how helpless an iron-clad could be, steaming around through the woods without an army to back her."

"Where will you carry this?" asked Porter, handing the despatch to the negro.

"In my calabash kiver, massa," responded the messenger with a grin; and, stowing the paper away in his woolly hair, he darted away.

The telegram being thus despatched, Porter again turned his attention to the willows; and, a fortunate rise in the water having occurred, he was able to extricate his vessels and begin his retreat down the bayou. He was somewhat perplexed by the silence of the Confederates, from whom he had heard nothing since his mortars silenced their masked batteries. The conundrum was solved by the sound of wood-chopping in the forests ahead, and the discovery shortly after of two heavy logs lying athwart the bayou, and stopping the progress of the vessels. An hour's hard work with axe and saw removed this obstruction; and the tug, slipping through first, shot ahead to prevent any more tree-felling. The loud reports of her howitzer soon carried back to the fleet the news that she had come up with the enemy, and was disputing with them the right to the bayou.

The difficulties of the retreat were no less great than those of the advance, with the intermittent attacks of the enemy added. The work of removing heavy, soggy logs, half submerged beneath the black waters of the bayou, clearing away standing trees, and breaking up and removing Red-river rafts, wearied the sailors, and left them little spirit to meet the enemy's attacks. The faint sounds of wood-chopping in the distance told too well of the additional impediments yet in store for the adventurous mariners. Scouts sent out reported that the enemy had impressed great gangs of negroes, and were forcing them to do the work of felling the trees that were to hem in Uncle Sam's gunboats, for the benefit of the C.S.A. But the plans of the Confederates to this end were easily defeated. Porter had not only many willing arms at his command, but the powerful aid of steam. When the gunboats came to a tree lying across the bayou, a landing party went ashore and fastened large pulleys to a tree on the bank. Then a rope was passed through the block; and one end having been made fast to the fallen tree, the other was taken aboard a gunboat. The word was then given, "Back the iron-clad hard;" and the fallen monarch of the forest was soon dragged across the bayou and out of the way. So expert did the jackies become in this work, that they were soon able to clear away the trees faster than the enemy could fell them. The tug then went ahead, and for a time put an end to further tree-chopping, and captured several of the negro axemen.

From the captured contrabands Porter learned that the attempt to cut off his retreat was directed by the military authorities at Vicksburg. This was a startling revelation. He had thought that the Confederates were in entire ignorance of his movement; and now it turned out that the wily Pemberton had kept a sharp lookout on the marauding gunboats, and was shrewdly planning for their capture. While Porter was pondering over this new discovery, a party of scouts came in, bringing in four captured Confederates, two of whom were commissioned officers. The commanding officer, a mere boy, was somewhat chagrined at being captured, but felt confident that his friends would recapture him shortly. Porter politely asked him to take a glass of wine and some supper.

"I don't care if I do," responded the youngster; "and I have the less compunction in taking it, as it belongs to us anyhow. In two hours you will be surrounded and bagged. You can't escape. How in the Devil's name you ever got here, is a wonder to me."

Porter smiled pleasantly, and, helping his guests lavishly, proceeded to question them on the numbers and position of the Confederate troops. He learned that a large body of troops had been sent out to surround the iron-clads, and were even then closing in upon the intruders. The danger was imminent, but Porter showed no trepidation.

"How far off are your troops?" he asked.

"About four miles. They will bag you at daylight," was the confident response.

"Well, gentlemen," said the admiral, "Gen. Sherman is now surrounding your forces with ten thousand men, and will capture them all before daylight." And so saying the admiral went on deck, leaving his captives lost in wonder; for the information carried to the Vicksburg authorities had made no mention of troops.

Though Porter had put on so bold a front before his captives, he really felt much anxiety for the fate of his iron-clads. He could hear nothing from Sherman, who might be thirty miles away for all he knew. Accordingly he retraced his course for a few miles, to throw the enemy off the scent, and the next day began again his descent of the bayou, bumping along stern foremost amid snags and standing trees. The enemy soon gave evidence that he was on the watch, and opened fire with his artillery from the rear. At this one gunboat steamed back and silenced the artillery

for a time, after which she rejoined her fellows. Sharp-shooters in the thickets along the levee then began to grow troublesome; and the whistle of the rifle-balls, with an occasional *ping* as one struck the smoke-stack, warned the sailors that the deck of a gunboat in a narrow canal was no safe place in time of war. The high levees on either side of the bayou made it impossible to use the guns properly: so Porter turned them into mortars, and, by using very small charges of powder, pitched shells up into the air, dropping them into the bushes back of the levee. This somewhat checked the fire of the sharp-shooters, but the decks were still dangerous places to frequent. A rifle-ball struck Lieut. Wells in the head as he stood talking to Porter; and he fell, apparently dead, upon the deck. The admiral beckoned an officer to come and bear away the body; but the newcomer was also hit, and fell across the body of the first. Porter concluded that the locality was getting rather hot, and gladly stepped behind a heavy plate of sheet-iron, which an old quartermaster brought him with the remark, "There, sir, stand behind that. They've fired at you long enough."

From behind his shield, Porter looked out anxiously at the forces by which he was beleaguered. He could see clearly that the Confederates were increasing in numbers; and, when at last he saw a long gray column come sweeping out of the woods, his heart failed him, and for a moment he thought that the fate of his flotilla was sealed. But at that very moment deliverance was at hand. The Confederates were seen to fall into confusion, waver, and give way before a thin blue line, — the advance guard of Sherman's troops. The negro "telegram-wire" had proved faithful, and Sherman had come on to the rescue.

That ended the difficulties of the flotilla. The enemy, once brought face to face with Sherman's men, departed abruptly; and soon the doughty general, mounted on an old gray horse, came riding down to the edge of the bayou, for a word with Porter. Seeing the admiral on the deck of his gunboat, he shouted out, "Hallo! Porter, what did you get into such an ugly scrape for? So much for you navy fellows getting out of your element. Better send for the soldiers always. My boys will put you through. Here's your little nigger. He came through all right, and I started at once. Your gunboats are enough to scare the crows: they look as if you had got a terrible hammering."

Somewhat crestfallen, Porter remarked, that he "never knew what helpless things iron-clads could become when they got in a ditch, and had no soldiers about." As Sherman declined to come aboard, Porter went below to look after his two prisoners.

"Well, gentlemen," said he, as he entered the cabin, "you were right. We are surrounded by troops."

The two Confederates were greatly exultant, but assured Porter that they would see that he was kindly treated when taken into Vicksburg.

"To Vicksburg!" said he with mock amazement. "Who said any thing of Vicksburg?"

"Why, of course you'll be taken there as a prisoner, now that our men have surrounded you."

"Oh, you are mistaken there!" responded Porter. "The troops by whom I am surrounded are Sherman's boys, six thousand strong." And at this news the chagrined captives subsided, and began to consider the prospects of a trip to the North, and incarceration in one of the military prisons.

Sherman's army soon came up in force, and went into camp along the road that skirted the levee. As night fell, the scene took on a wild and picturesque air. In the narrow bayou lay the gunboats, strung out in single file along a line of half a mile. They bore many signs of the hard knocks they had received in their excursion through the woods. Boats, davits, steam-pipes, and every thing breakable that rose above the level of the deck, had been swept away by the overhanging boughs, or dashed to pieces by falling trees. The smoke-stacks and wheel-houses were riddled by the bullets of the Confederate sharp-shooters. The decks were covered with rubbish of all kinds, and here and there was a fissure that told of the bursting of some Confederate shell. The paint was blistered, and peeling off, from the effects of the cotton-fire through which the fleet had dashed.

On the shore blazed the camp-fires of Sherman's troops; and about the huge flaming piles the weary soldiers threw themselves down to catch a moment's rest, while the company cooks prepared the evening meal. Many of the idle soldiers strolled down to the edge of the bayou, and, forming a line along the levee, began chaffing the sailors on the ludicrous failure of their attempt to perform naval evolutions in a swamp.

"What's gone with your boats, Jack?" sung out one tall fellow in cavalry garb. "Been in dry-dock for repairs?"

"How do you like playing mud-turtle?" said another. "Better stick to salt water after this."

"Don't go bush-whacking again, unless you have the soldiers with you You look as if your mothers didn't know you were out." And at this a yell of approval went up all along the line, while the badgered sailors growled and tried to make sharp retorts to the stinging ridicule of the landsmen.

So ended this memorable gunboat expedition. It is unparalleled in the history of warfare. The feats performed by the unwieldy iron-clads in the narrow bayous gained for them, from Lincoln, the title of "web-footed" gunboats. They had traversed shallow and tortuous channels; they had cleared their path of trees, snags, and even bridges; they had run the gantlet of flaming cotton-bales and Confederate bullets. After meeting and overcoming so many obstacles, their final stoppage by a thicket of pitiful willow-shoots irritated the blue-jackets and their commander extremely. Porter had penetrated so far into the Yazoo country that he could see how great damage could be inflicted upon the Confederates, if the expedition could but be carried out successfully. He had definite information to the effect, that, at Yazoo City, the Confederates had a thriving shipyard, at which they were pressing forward the construction of steam-rams with which to sweep the Mississippi. To reach that point and destroy the vessels, would have been a service thoroughly in accord with his tastes; but the willows held him back. However, he was able to console himself with the thought that the rams were not likely to do the Confederates any immediate service; for a truthful contraband, brought in by the Union scouts, informed the admiral that "dey has no bottom in, no sides to 'em, an' no top on to 'em, sah; an' dere injines is in Richmon'."

When the dangers encountered by the gunboats during this expedition are considered, the damage sustained seems surprisingly small. Had the Confederates acted promptly and vigorously, the intruders would never have escaped from the swamps into which their temerity had led them. A few torpedoes, judiciously planted in the muddy bed of the bayou, would have effectively prevented any farther advance. More than once the Confederates posted their artillery within effective range, and opened

a rapid and well-directed fire upon the gunboats, but erred in using explosive shells instead of solid shot. "They were evidently greenhorns," wrote Porter, exulting over his narrow escape, "and failed to understand that we were iron-clad, and did not mind *bursting*-shell. If they had used solid shot, they might have hurt us." The infantry forces of the enemy were ample to have given the marauding gunboats a vast deal of trouble, if the Confederate officers had been enterprising, and had seized upon the opportunities afforded them. Night after night the flotilla lay tied up in the centre of a narrow bayou, with the levees towering so high above the gunboats' ports, that the cannon were useless. At such a time, a determined assault by a body of hostile infantry could hardly have been resisted. Such an attack was the danger which Porter most feared throughout the expedition, and he nightly made preparations for a desperate resistance. The widest part of the bayou was chosen for the anchorage, in order that a strip of water at least four feet wide might separate the gunboats from the shore. The sides of the iron-clads were then greased, and the guns loaded with grape, and elevated as much as possible. Landing parties with howitzers were sent ashore, and posted so as to enfilade any attacking force; scouts were sent out in all directions; and the crews of the gunboats slept at their quarters all night, ready for action at the first alarm. But it is doubtful whether even these elaborate precautions could have saved the flotilla, had the Confederates brought one regiment to the assault. However, the enemy let the golden moment pass; and, after suffering the agonies of suspense for several days, Porter at last saw his gunboats safely anchored by the side of Sherman's protecting regiments

Sherman and Porter held a consultation that night, and concluded that it was useless to try to get around Vicksburg by hauling the gunboats through the woods; and the following morning the flotilla started back to the Union headquarters on the Mississippi.

Gen. Grant was beginning to get impatient. Weeks had passed away, and there were still no gunboats or transports below the Vicksburg batteries to aid him in carrying out his military plans. He held a long consultation with Porter, the outcome of which was that the admiral decided to run his gunboats and transports right through the fire of the Confederate guns.

But, before sending a vessel through, Porter thought that he would test

the accuracy of the Confederate gunners by giving them a dummy to fire at. He took a large flat boat, and built it up with logs and lumber until it looked like a powerful ram. Two huge wheel-houses towered amidships, on each of which was painted, in great, staring letters, "Deluded Rebels, cave in." From the open ports, the muzzles of what appeared to be heavy rifles protruded; though the guns that seemed so formidable were really only logs of wood. Two high smoke-stacks, built of empty pork-barrels, rose from the centre of this strange craft; and at the bottom of each stack was an iron pot, in which was a heap of tar and oakum that sent forth volumes of black smoke when lighted. One dark night the fires in this sham monster were lighted, and she was towed down to the Confederate batteries, and set drifting down the river. She was quickly discovered, and the batteries on the bluffs opened on her with a roar. There was nothing about the dummy to be hurt, however; and it was impossible to sink her. So she sailed majestically through the plunging hail of solid shot, and past the terrible batteries that were thought to be a match for any thing afloat. The Confederates in the trenches looked at each other in astonishment and dismay. Word was sent to Gen. Pemberton that a powerful Yankee iron-clad had passed the batteries unhurt, and was speeding down the stream. The General's first thought was of a gunboat, the "Indianola," lately captured from the Federals, and now being converted into an iron-clad ram. She must be saved from recapture, even if it should be necessary to destroy her. Word was hurriedly sent down the river that a formidable ram was bearing down upon the "Indianola;" and, if the latter vessel was not in condition to do battle, she should be blown up. Accordingly, while the dummy ram, caught in an eddy of the river, was whirling helplessly around just below Vicksburg, the Confederates put the torch to their new war-vessel, and she was soon a heap of ashes. Porter's little joke was a good one for the United States.

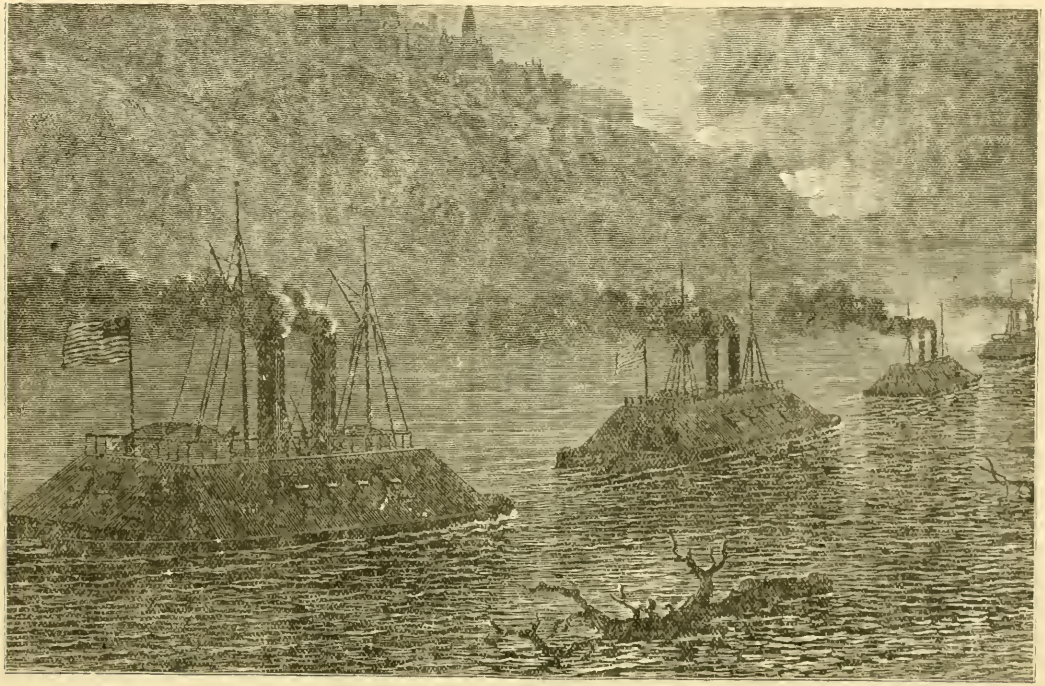
But all the time that the Union navy was making these futile attempts to get the better of the wily general who held the fort at Vicksburg, a constant bombardment of the city was kept up. From gunboats and land batteries, shells were hurled into the streets of the town, tearing down houses, killing men, women, and children, and driving the inhabitants to their cellars, or to deep caves dug in the hills. The fire from the Union gunboats was most destructive, for they could drop down to an advantageous point, shell the city until tired, then steam back into safety again.

Cave-digging in the city became a regular business; and caves brought from twenty to fifty dollars, according to their size. They generally consisted of two or three rooms, and people lived in them quite cheerfully during the time that the iron hail was falling in the city's streets.

A Northern woman, who was pent up in Vicksburg during the siege, tells graphically the story of the bombardment: —

"For many nights we have had but little sleep, because the Federal gunboats have been running past the batteries. The uproar when this is happening is phenomenal. The first night the thundering artillery burst the bars of sleep, we thought it an attack by the river. To get into garments, and rush up-stairs, was the work of a moment. From the upper gallery we have a fine view of the river; and soon a red glare lit up the scene, and showed a small boat, towing two large barges, gliding by. The Confederates had set fire to a house near the bank. Another night, eight boats ran by, throwing a shower of shot; and two burning houses made the river clear as day. One of the batteries has a remarkable gun they call 'whistling Dick,' because of the screeching, whistling sound it gives; and certainly it does sound like a tortured thing. Added to all this is the indescribable Confederate yell, which is a soul-harrowing sound to hear. I have gained respect for the mechanism of the human ear, which stands it all without injury. The streets are seldom quiet at night: even the dragging about of cannon makes a din in these echoing gullies. The other night we were on the gallery till the last of the eight boats got by. Next day a friend said to H——, 'It was a wonder you didn't have your heads taken off last night. I passed, and saw them stretched over the gallery; and grape-shot were whizzing up the street just on a level with you.' The double roar of batteries and boats was so great, we never noticed the whizzing. Yesterday the 'Cincinnati' attempted to go by in daylight, but was disabled and sunk. It was a pitiful sight: we could not see the *finale*, though we saw her rendered helpless.

"Since that day the regular siege has continued. We are utterly cut off from the world, surrounded by a circle of fire. Would it be wise, like the scorpion, to sting ourselves to death? The fiery shower of shells goes on day and night. H——'s occupation, of course, is gone, his office closed. Every man has to carry a pass in his pocket. People do nothing but eat what they can get, sleep when they can, and dodge the shells. There are



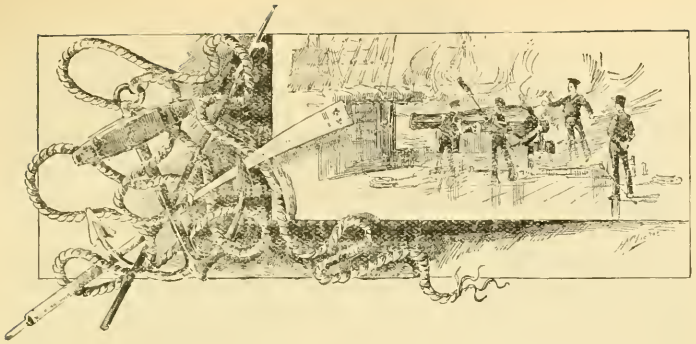
PASSING THE VICKSBURG BATTERIES.

three intervals when the shelling stops, — either for the guns to cool, or for the gunners' meals, I suppose, — about eight in the morning, the same in the evening, and at noon. In that time we have to both prepare and eat ours. Clothing cannot be washed, or any thing else done. On the 19th and 22d, when the assaults were made on the lines, I watched the soldiers cooking on the green opposite. The half-spent balls, coming all the way from those lines, were flying so thick that they were obliged to dodge at every turn. At all the caves I could see from my high perch, people were sitting, eating their poor suppers at the cave doors, ready to plunge in again. As the first shell again flew, they dived; and not a human being was visible. The sharp crackle of the musketry-firing was a strong contrast to the scream of the bombs. I think all the dogs and cats must be killed or starved: we don't see any more pitiful animals prowling around. . . . The cellar is so damp and musty, the bedding has to be carried out and laid in the sun every day, with the forecast that it may be demolished at any moment. The confinement is dreadful. To sit and listen as if waiting for death in a horrible manner, would drive me insane. I don't know what others do, but we read when I am not scribbling in this. H—— borrowed somewhere a lot of Dickens's novels, and we re-read them by the dim light in the cellar. When the shelling abates, H—— goes to walk about a little, or get the 'Daily Citizen,' which is still issuing a tiny sheet at twenty-five and fifty cents a copy. It is, of course, but a rehash of speculations which amuses a half-hour. To-day he heard, while out, that expert swimmers are crossing the Mississippi on logs at night, to bring and carry news to Johnston. I am so tired of corn-bread, which I never liked, that I eat it with tears in my eyes. We are lucky to get a quart of milk daily from a family near, who have a cow they hourly expect to be killed. I send five dollars to market each morning, and it buys a small piece of mule-meat. Rice and milk is my main food: I can't eat the mule-meat. We boil the rice, and eat it cold, with milk, for supper. Martha runs the gauntlet to buy the meat and milk once a day in a perfect terror. The shells seem to have many different names. I hear the soldiers say, 'That's a mortar-shell. There goes a Parrott. That's a rifle-shell.' They are all equally terrible. A pair of chimney-swallows have built in the parlor chimney. The concussion of the house often sends down parts of their nest, which they patiently pick up and re-ascend with."

Grant's impassable lines about the beleaguered city soon made starvation more to be feared than even the terrible shells from the cannon of the gunboats. Necessaries of all sorts became wofully scarce in Vicksburg. Five dollars could purchase only a little bit of mule's flesh, hardly enough for a meal for two people. Flour was not to be had at any price Bread was made of coarse corn-meal or grated peas. The ammunition of the soldiers in the trenches soon began to give out, and the utmost economy was exercised. Many of the soldiers were armed with muskets that required caps, and it was not many days before caps were at a great premium. They were generally smuggled into the city through the Union lines by fleet-footed carriers, who ran a long gauntlet of Union pickets. Many were shot down in the attempt, but more succeeded. One man who brought in sixteen thousand caps, was nine days travelling thirteen miles, and was fired on more than twenty times.

But, though Grant could have starved the city into subjection by simply sitting and waiting, he grew tired of this, and determined to force matters to an issue. The first thing to be done was to get the gunboats and transports past the batteries. The transports were put into shape to stand a cannonade by having their weaker parts covered with cotton-bales; and on one dark night in June, the flotilla started down the river, with the iron-clad gunboats in advance. Admiral Porter led in the "Benton." At eleven o'clock the fleet got under way; and, as the "Benton" came abreast of the first batteries, the alarm was given in the Confederate camp, and a fierce cannonade began. Huge fires were lighted on the shores to light up the river, and make the gunboats visible to the Confederate cannoneers. The war-ships swung grandly around the bend, responding with rapid broadsides to the fire of the forts. All the vessels were hit once or oftener. The heavy smoke that accompanies such fierce cannonading hung over the river, cutting off all view of the surroundings from the sailors. The eddying currents of the river caught the steamers, swinging them now this way, now that, until the perplexed pilots knew not which way their vessels were headed. The blue-jackets at the guns worked away cheerily, knowing that enemies were on every side of them, and that, no matter which way their missiles sped, an enemy was to be found. More than one vessel turned completely around; and once, when the rising breeze cleared away the smoke, the pilot of the "Benton" found that he was taking his

ship up-stream again, and was in imminent danger of running down a friendly gunboat. But they all passed on without receiving any severe injuries, and at five o'clock in the morning lay anchored far below the city, ready to begin the attack upon the Confederate batteries at Grand Gulf which were called "the key to Vicksburg."



## CHAPTER XVI.

VICKSBURG SURRENDERS, AND THE MISSISSIPPI IS OPENED.—NAVAL EVENTS ALONG THE GULF COAST.

THE first grand step toward the capture of Vicksburg was made when the river-flotilla followed Porter down the Mississippi, and past the guns of the Confederate batteries. Grant, with his army, had followed along the western bank of the great river; and we now find him ready to cross the river, and move upon the Vicksburg batteries from the south. But, before this could be done, the Confederate works at Grand Gulf must be silenced; and it again happened that the navy was to be the chief factor in the contest. For this new battle all the blue-jackets were ready and anxious. Admiral Porter says that "when daylight broke, after the passage of the fleet, I was besieged by the commanding officers of the gunboats, who came to tell me of their mishaps; but, when I intimated that I intended to leave at Carthage any vessel that could not stand the hammering they would be subject to at Grand Gulf, they suddenly discovered that no damage had been done to their vessels, which, if any thing, were better prepared for action than when they started out!"

The Confederate works at Grand Gulf mounted eighteen guns; and, as they stood upon high bluffs overlooking the river, they were most formid-

able. It was decided by the Federals that the navy alone should undertake the task of reducing the fortifications, — a decision that was of benefit to the Confederates, for their strongest position was along the river-front. Four of the guns held a raking position up and down the long stretch of muddy water that swirled and eddied by with a current of seven miles an hour.

While the fort had the advantage of position, the gunboats were much stronger in their armament; and the contest was looked forward to as one bound to be desperate. The position of every gun in the batteries, and the size of the garrison, were well known to every commander of a Union vessel; and they made the most careful preparations for the assault.

The Confederates knew that the result of that day's battle would decide the ownership of Vicksburg, and they were prepared to offer the most desperate resistance. The orders at every battery were to use shell alone; and the men were instructed to fire carefully, and only after taking deadly aim. In a high tree just outside the fort a lookout was stationed; and at early daylight, on the morning of the 29th of April, 1863, he signalled that the fleet of gunboats was bearing down upon the works.

Men who were in the fort that morning saw a strange panorama. The stillness was most profound on the shore and on the river. The boats moved slowly and grandly down, not a man in sight, and with no sign of life. The trees up the river were black with Federal spectators; and the chirp of birds was all about the men who stood waiting beside the huge cannon.

Porter went at his work with a vim which made the forest tremble and the river bubble. For the first few minutes the Confederates were appalled by the fierceness of the fire, which stands on record as the fastest in the war; but, when the forts did get down to their work, they went in with a roar that almost deafened the Federal soldiers three miles away. Great shells burst over the gunboats, or, falling into the water close by their sides, threw up columns of water that deluged the decks. The vessels found the greatest difficulty in getting good positions for the swift-eddying current. One moment they were bow on, the next headed down stream, or up, or whirling around in circles. Of course this greatly hurt the aim of the gunners, but it likewise made the vessels poor targets for the Confederates.

Three gunboats — the "Benton," "Tuscumbia," and "Lafayette" —

engaged the upper battery; and nowhere in naval history is found the record of faster firing than was done by these ships. Their huge shells tore away at the walls of earth, throwing up tons of dirt with each explosion, but not seeming to affect the strength of the fort at all. Not a shot entered an embrasure, though many came near it. One of the Confederate artillerists said after the fight, —

"There was not one single minute in all that five hours in which I did not expect death. We all worked away as if in a nightmare, and we all felt that any moment might be our last. The 'Benton' fired repeatedly at my gun; and as many as twenty of her shells struck the opening, tearing holes in the parapet ten feet back. Twenty times we were almost buried out of sight under the clouds of dirt, and the loose earth was knee deep around our gun when the fight closed. Not one of us was hit hard enough to draw blood, and yet we all felt ten years older for that five hours' work. I sighted the gun, and saw fourteen of my shot hit the 'Benton,' and six plunge into another."

The gunboats fought in a way that showed desperate determination. The first gun from the "Lafayette" was answered by a shell which crashed through her side and exploded in a wardroom, knocking every thing into chips. Three times the carpenter came up and reported to the captain that the ship was sinking; and each time the reply was, "Very well, sir: keep right on firing until the guns are under water." When the ship came out of the fight, she counted up fifty scars.

The long-range firing that was carried on at first did not satisfy the "Mound City." One particular gunner on the Confederate works seemed to cherish a spite against her; and every time the flame leaped from the muzzle of his gun, a solid shot banged against the gunboat's side. This was not to be tamely borne; and the "Mound City" rushed up so close to the bank that her bow stirred up the mud, and from that position opened fast and furiously upon the forts with grape and canister. A hail of rifle-bullets fell upon her decks; but she stuck to her post, and succeeded in driving the enemy to the bomb-proofs.

But, with all their pluck and rapid firing, the gunners of the fleet were making no impression on the works. Gen. Grant, who was watching the engagement from a tug in mid-stream, saw this, and determined to rush his soldiers past the fort in transports, while the navy engaged the enemy's

guns. This was done quickly, and towards night the ships returned to their post up the river, leaving the Confederates in possession of the batteries. But the great point had been gained; and Grant's army was moving on Vicksburg, with nothing to interfere with its besieging operations.

Then began that series of attacks and repulses, of building trenches, paralleling, and advancing steadily, until the lines of the Federals and the Confederates were so close together that the men used to shout jokes and taunts over the breastworks. All the Confederates were known as "Johnnies," and all Union soldiers as "Yanks." Often "Johnny" would call out, "Well, Yank, when are you coming into town?" Sometimes the answer was, "We propose to celebrate the Fourth of July there." The "Johnnies" did not believe this; but it was true, nevertheless, for on July 4 Grant's victorious army marched into Vicksburg. A day or two later the Confederate works at Port Hudson and Grand Gulf were surrendered to the Federals, and the Mississippi was again open for commerce throughout its length.

When the fall of Vicksburg had thus left the river clear, Admiral Porter was ordered to take his fleet up the Red River, and clear away any Confederate works that he might find on the banks of that stream. Gen. A. J. Smith, with a strong body of troops, accompanied him; while Gen. Banks was to march his troops overland from Texas, and join the expedition at Shreveport. For several days the gunboats pressed forward up the crooked stream, meeting with no opposition, save from the sharp-shooters who lined the banks on either side, and kept up a constant fire of small-arms.

Shreveport was reached in safety; and, after a short halt, the flotilla started again on their voyage up the river. They had proceeded but a short distance when a courier came galloping down the river's bank, waving a despatch, which he handed to Admiral Porter.

"The despatch read, 'Gen. Banks badly defeated; return.' Here was a dilemma to be placed in, — a victorious army between us and our own forces a long, winding, shallow river wherein the vessels were continually grounding; a long string of empty transports, with many doubtful captains, who were constantly making excuses to lie by or to land (in other words, who were trying to put their vessels into the power of the Confederates); and a thousand points on the river where we could be attacked with great advan-

sage by the enemy; and the banks lined with sharp-shooters, by whom every incautious soldier who showed himself was shot."

But, though the admiral clearly saw all the dangers he was exposed to, and which he recounts in the foregoing paragraph, he did not propose to return, but pressed forward. He soon reached the scene of battle, and with the big guns of his boats covered the retreat of the troops; then, having done all there was to be done, started down the river.

But now came the great trouble of the whole expedition. Those Southern rivers are accustomed in summer to fall rapidly until they become mere dry ditches, with a narrow rivulet, hardly deep enough to float a row-boat, flowing down the centre. This was the summer season, and the Red River was falling fast. The banks swarmed with gray-coated soldiery, anxious to be on hand to capture the ships. At Grand Écore the "Eastport" became unmanageable, and was blown up. The fleet continued on its way quietly, until a serious obstacle was met. Admiral Porter writes: —

"One of the 'Cricket's' guns was mounted on the upper deck forward, to command the banks; and a crew of six men were kept stationed at it, ready to fire at any thing hostile.

"We went along at a moderate pace, to keep within supporting distance of each other. I was sitting on the upper deck, reading, with one eye on the book and the other on the bushes, when I saw men's heads, and sang out to the commanding officer, Gorringe, 'Give those fellows in the bushes a two second shell.' A moment after the shell burst in the midst of the people on the bank.

"'Give them another dose,' I said, when, to my astonishment, there came on board a shower of projectiles that fairly made the little 'Cricket' stagger. Nineteen shells burst on board our vessel at the first volley. It was the gun-battery of which our prisoner had told us. We were going along at this time about six knots an hour; and, before we could fire another gun, we were right under the battery and turning the point, presenting the 'Cricket's' stern to the enemy. They gave us nine shells when we were not more than twenty yards distant from the bank, all of which burst inside of us; and, as the vessel's stern was presented, they poured in ten more shots, which raked us fore and aft.

"Then came the roar of three thousand muskets, which seemed to strike every spot in the vessel. Fortunately her sides were musket-proof.

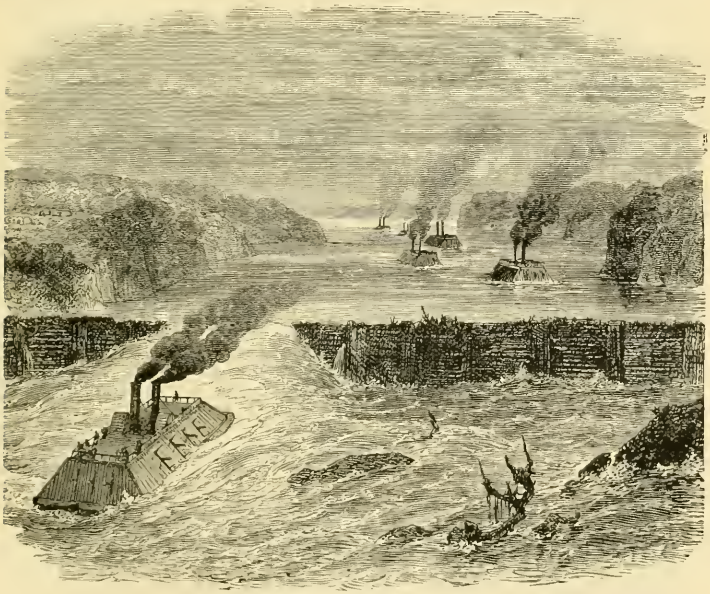
"The 'Cricket' stopped. I had been expecting it. How, thought I, could all these shells go through a vessel without disabling the machinery? The Rebels gave three cheers, and let us drift on: they were determined to have the whole of us. They opened their guns on the two pump-boats, and sunk them at the first discharge. The poor negroes that could swim tried to reach the shore; but the musketeers picked off those that were in the water or clinging to the wrecks. It was a dreadful spectacle to witness, with no power to prevent it; but it turned out to be the salvation of the 'Cricket.' All this took place in less than five minutes.

"The moment the 'Cricket' received the first discharge of artillery, I went on deck to the pilot-house, saluted by a volley of musketry as I passed along; and, as I opened the pilot-house door, I saw that the pilot, Mr. Dreuing, had his head cut open by a piece of shell, and the blood was streaming down his cheeks. He still held on to the wheel. 'I am all right, sir,' he said: 'I won't give up the wheel.'

"Gorringe was perfectly cool, and was ringing the engine-room bell to go ahead. In front of the wheel-house, the bodies of the men who manned the howitzer were piled up. A shell had struck the gun, and, exploding, had killed all the crew, — a glorious death for them."

Porter now found himself in a bad fix. His guns could not be elevated enough to bear on the batteries that stood on the crest of the high bluffs There was nothing to do but to run by at the best possible rate of speed. Suddenly the engine stopped, and the vessel floated helplessly down the stream. Porter rushed below to discover the trouble. In the engine-room stood the engineer leaning heavily against the throttle. Porter shouted at him, but received no reply; then, putting his hand on the man's shoulder, found him dead. The admiral threw the body aside, pulled open the throttle, and the "Cricket" glided along past the batteries to a safe refuge downstream. The other ships came down safely, although more or less cut up; and the flotilla continued its retreat down the stream. For a day or two all went smoothly as a holiday excursion; then came a sudden reverse, that, for for a time, seemed to make certain the loss of the entire fleet. At Alexandria the Red-river bottom is full of great rocks that make it impassable except at the highest water. When Porter's gunboats arrived, they found themselves caught in a trap from which there seemed to be no hope of escape. The army was encamped along the banks of the river, and the

soldiers began again their jokes upon Porter's habit of taking gunboats for an overland journey. The army generals began to get impatient, and advised Porter to blow up his ships, as the troops must soon march on and leave him. Porter was sick in bed, but this suggestion aroused him. "Burn my gunboats!" he cried, springing to his feet. "Never! I'll wait here for high water if I have to wait two years." And, indeed, it began to look as though he would be forced to wait nearly that long.



BAILEY'S DAM ON THE RED RIVER.

In this time of suspense, there arose a man equal to the emergency. A certain Lieut.-Col. Bailey, who had been a Wisconsin lumberman, came to Porter, and suggested that a dam should be built to raise the water fourteen feet above the falls. Porter jumped at the suggestion, and eight thousand men were set to work.

"It will take too much time to enter into the details of this truly wonder-

ful work," writes Admiral Porter. "Suffice it to say that the dam had nearly reached completion in eight days' working-time, and the water had risen sufficiently on the upper falls to allow the 'Fort Hindman,' 'Osage,' and 'Neosho' to get down and be ready to pass the dam. In another day it would have been high enough to enable all the other vessels to pass the upper falls. Unfortunately, on the morning of the 9th instant the pressure of water became so great that it swept away two of the stone barges which swung in below the dam on one side. Seeing this unfortunate accident, I jumped on a horse, and rode up to where the upper vessels were anchored, and ordered the 'Lexington' to pass the upper falls if possible, and immediately attempt to go through the dam. I thought I might be able to save the four vessels below, not knowing whether the persons employed on the work would ever have the heart to renew their enterprise.

"The 'Lexington' succeeded in getting over the upper falls just in time, the water rapidly falling as she was passing over. She then steered directly for the opening in the dam, through which the water was rushing so furiously that it seemed as if nothing but destruction awaited her. Thousands of beating hearts looked on, anxious for the result. The silence was so great as the 'Lexington' approached the dam, that a pin might almost be heard to fall. She entered the gap with a full head of steam on, pitched down the roaring torrent, made two or three spasmodic rolls, hung for a moment on the rocks below, was then swept into deep water by the current, and rounded to safely into the bank. Thirty thousand voices rose in one deafening cheer, and universal joy seemed to pervade the face of every man present."

After the dam was repaired, the rest of the fleet passed down safely.

With the escape of the Red-river flotilla, the career of Admiral Porter on the rivers ended. Indeed, there was but little work for the river navy remaining. The Mississippi, Tennessee, and Cumberland Rivers were opened; and the Confederate works on the smaller streams were unimportant, and could be left to fall with the fall of the Confederacy, which was near at hand. There was work for fighting sea-captains along the Atlantic coast, and thither Admiral Porter was ordered. He will re-appear at the bombardment of Fort Fisher.

An event which caused the greatest excitement in naval circles at this time, and which for courage and dash has probably never been equalled in

the history of the world, was the run of the Confederate privateer "Florida" past the United States fleet blockading the harbor of Mobile. The "Florida" was originally a merchant-ship, known as the "Oreto;" and under that name she sailed from Liverpool, carrying a peaceful cargo, and manned by sailors who had no idea that any thing beyond a peaceable voyage was planned. She was commanded by an English sea-captain; and, although the United States consul at Liverpool looked on her with some suspicion, yet he could find no pretext upon which to oppose her departure.

Hardly had the ship passed the mouth of the Mersey, when her course was shaped for Nassau, the haven of privateers and blockade-runners. At Nassau several officers of the Confederate navy were living; and from the anxiety with which they scanned the horizon day after day, through their telescopes, it would seem that they were watching for some friendly craft. The "Oreto" arrived safely at Nassau; and a young gentleman who had come with her made all possible haste ashore, and delivered to the watchful gentlemen in the town certain letters, which made them first look with the greatest satisfaction at the newly arrived ship, and then begin again their outlook for vessels. The letters were from Capt. Bulloch, the agent in London of the Confederacy; and by them he notified his brother naval officers that he delivered to them the "Oreto," an admirably built ship, suited for an armed cruiser. "It has been impossible to get the regular battery intended for her on board," wrote Capt. Bulloch; "but I have sent out four seven-inch rifled guns, with all necessary equipments, in the steamship 'Bahama,' bound for Nassau."

So here were the naval officers and their ship, but the guns were yet to come; and, when they did come, some shrewd planning would be necessary to get the guns mounted without alarming the British authorities. By the time the "Bahama" arrived, the plans were all made. As the steamer came up to the dock, a small schooner slipped alongside, and eight or ten heavy cases were transferred from the larger vessel's hold to the deck of the coaster. Then the little vessel sailed over to Green Cay, a desert island about sixty miles from Nassau, where she was soon joined by the "Oreto." There the work of changing the peaceful merchantman "Oreto" into the war-cruiser "Florida" began.

The work of transferring the armament, and mounting the guns, was very laborious. The hot sun of August at the equator poured down upon

them. Exposure and general discomforts told heavily upon them; and before long the yellow-fever, that most terrible scourge of the West Indies, broke out among the men. There was no surgeon on board, and the care of the sick fell upon Capt. Maffitt. Two United States men-of-war were hunting through the West Indies for the vessel they knew was fitting out somewhere amid the coral reefs and sandy, desolate keys. But Maffitt kept up his courage, and before long found himself at sea, with a good stanch ship and crew, that, though short-handed, was made up of the very best material. But he had hardly cut loose from civilization, and started out upon his cruise, when he discovered, that, in the worry and haste of his departure, he had put to sea without rammers or sponges for his guns. He was in a desperate plight. Had the smallest United States man-of-war met the "Florida," the Confederate could not have offered the slightest resistance. She could not have even fired a gun. Capt. Maffitt ran his vessel into Havana in the hopes of being allowed to refit there; but the fortunes of the Confederacy were waning fast, and all nations feared to give it aid or comfort. Seeing no hope, Maffitt determined to dare all things, and make a dash for Mobile through the very centre of the blockading-fleet.

When the "Florida" put out from the harbor of Havana, only four or five men were able to be on deck. The rest, with her commander, were below, deathly sick with yellow-fever. Under the command of a young lieutenant, her course was laid for Mobile; and in a few hours the smoke of the blockading-vessels could be seen rising on the clear air. An English ensign was hoisted, and the fleet ship dashed towards the men-o'-war that lay in wait. A blank cartridge was fired to warn her away, but she paid no heed. Then came a solid shot that ploughed up the water before her bow. As this evoked no response, the whole fleet opened fire with shot and shell. "Had they depressed their guns but a little," said Maffitt afterwards, "the career of the 'Florida' would have ended then and there." But, as it was, she sped on, with no signs of damage save the flying ends of cut cordage. She could not respond to the fire, for but three men remained on her deck. So, silently and grimly, she rushed through the fleet, and finally passed the last frigate. Quarter of an hour later she anchored under the guns of Fort Morgan. She had received eight shots in her hull, and her masts were chipped by dozens of fragments

of shell. After refitting, the "Florida" waited nearly a month for a chance to get out again. Finally the moment arrived; and she made her escape, though chased for four hours by the blockaders. Once on the open sea, she began the regular career of Confederate cruisers, burned unarmed ships, and avoided war-vessels, until she was run down in a neutral port by a Union man-of-war, whose commander acted in utter defiance of all the rules of modern warfare. In the career of the "Florida," after her escape from Mobile, there was nothing of moment; and her capture, treacherous as it was, brought more discredit upon the Northern arms than did her depredations work injury to the Northern merchant-marine.

## CHAPTER XVII.

ERATIONS ABOUT CHARLESTON.—THE BOMBARDMENT, THE SIEGE, AND THE CAPTURE.

WE have now reached the period at which the rapid decline in the prospects of the Confederacy had become apparent, not only to its enemies, but to its friends. Throughout the South the stars and bars floated over only three strongholds of any importance,—Charleston, Mobile, and Wilmington. One after the other these were destined to fall, and their final overthrow was to be the work of the navy. It was no easy task in any one of the three instances to dislodge the Confederates from their positions; for though beaten in the Middle States, driven from the Mississippi, and with their very citadel at Vicksburg in the hands of the Federals, they still fought with a courage and desperation that for a long time baffled the attacks of the Unionists.

From the very opening of the war, Charleston Harbor had been the scene of naval hostilities. The Confederates, looking upon their mouldering wharves, and vessels tugging idly at their chains, then looking out to sea past Fort Sumter, could see the ships of the blockading-squadron maintaining the watchful guard that was slowly reducing the city to penury. What wonder that the blood of the good people of Charleston boiled, and that they built, and hurled against their hated enemy, weird

naval monsters, shapeless torpedo-boats running beneath the water, or huge rams that might even batter in the heavy walls of Fort Sumter!

One attack so made was successful to a certain extent. It was in February, 1864, that an inventive genius in the beleaguered city brought out a steam torpedo-boat. The craft was about twenty-five feet long, shaped like a cigar, built of boiler iron, and propelled by a screw. She had no smoke-stack, and her deck barely rose above the surface of the water. Running out from her bow was a stout spar fifteen feet long, bearing at its end a huge torpedo charged with two hundred pounds of powder. Just before nine o'clock one night, the lookout on the deck of the frigate "Housatonic" saw this strange object approaching the ship. It was a bright night, with no sea on. As yet torpedoes were hardly known, so the lookout took it for a large fish, and simply watched with interest its playful movements. Not until it came so close that no guns could be brought to bear, did any suspicion of danger enter the lookout's mind. Then there was the roll of the alarm-drums; while the men rushed to the side, and poured a fierce fire from small-arms on the mysterious object. The "Housatonic" started her engines, and tried to escape; but, before any headway could be gained, the launch dashed alongside, and a slight jar was felt. Then, with a tremendous roar, a huge column of water was thrown high in air, washing away men and boats from the deck of the war-ship. A hole large enough to drive a horse through was rent in the hull of the ship. Great beams were broken in twain, the heaviest guns were dismounted, and men were hurled fifty feet into the air. In five minutes the ship had gone to the bottom, and boats from other vessels were picking up the crew. The launch escaped in the excitement.

The Union sailor-boys did not let the Confederates outdo them in dash and pluck. One of the cleverest bits of work in the whole war was done by four boat-crews from two men-of-war on the Charleston station. Word had been brought to the blockaders, that, far up a little deep and narrow creek, a large steamship was loading with cotton, expecting to reach the ocean through the labyrinth of inlets that fairly honeycomb the South Carolina coast. Should she once get into that network of water-ways, it would require a whole fleet to catch her; for there was no telling at what point she might emerge.

It was at once determined to try to capture her as she lay at her dock,

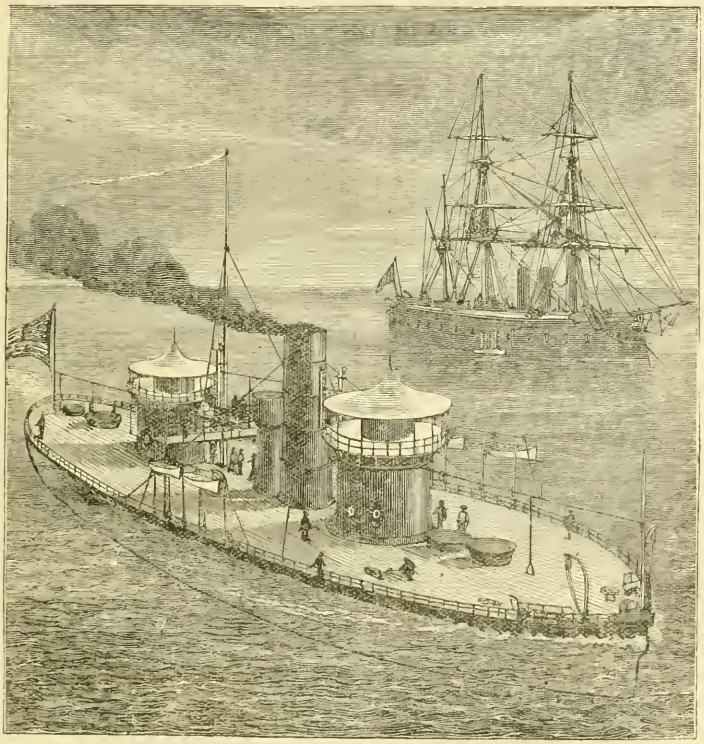
and four boats' crews of picked men were sent out on the expedition. It was early evening when they set out; and all through the dark night they pulled away, threading the mazes of the tidal inlets. Just as the eastern horizon was beginning to grow gray with the coming dawn, they came in sight of their destination. Sure enough, there on the bank of the river was a little Southern village, changed into a prosperous town by the blockade-runners that had evidently been making this place a harbor for some time.

All was dark and silent as the grave. Confident in their fancied security, the blockade-runners had all turned in, leaving no one on guard. The steamer was loaded, and ready to sail in the morning; and the thin wreaths of smoke rising from her smoke-stack told that the fires were up. Stealthily the sailors pulled alongside, and clambered on deck. Without a word they stole below, put the crew under guards, and rushed into the engine-room, where they found the engineer dozing on his stool. He was ordered to get under way at once; and, though he looked rather dazed, he obeyed the order. And in fifteen minutes the steamer was speeding down-stream, leaving the old town still asleep.

One man alone of all the townspeople had seen the capture. A negro, hiding behind a pile of lumber on the dock, had watched the whole affair, and, as if struck dumb with astonishment, failed to give the alarm until the steamer was out of sight down the winding stream. The blue-jackets took their capture safely out of the enemy's lines, and the next day it was sent to New York as a prize.

While the navy was keeping the port of Charleston sealed, and every now and then beating back the improvised gunboats that the Confederates sent out in the forlorn hope of breaking through the blockade, the armies of the North were closing in upon the doomed city. All the North cried aloud for the capture of Charleston. It was the city which fired the first gun of the war. Let it be reduced! On every available point of land a Union battery was built. Far out in the swamps back of the city, where it was thought no living thing save reptiles could exist, the soldiers of the North had raised a battery, mounting one two-hundred-pound gun. When a young lieutenant was ordered to build this battery, he looked the ground over, and reported the thing impossible. "There is no such word as impossible," sternly answered the colonel. "Set to work, and call for whatever you need to secure success."

The next day the lieutenant, who was a bit of a wag, made a requisition on the quartermaster for one hundred men eighteen feet high, to wade through mud sixteen feet deep. Pleasantry is not appreciated in war; and



WAR-SHIPS OFF CHARLESTON HARBOR.

the officer was arrested, but soon secured his release, and built the battery with men of ordinary height.

In April, 1862, Admiral Du Pont had lined his iron-clads and monitors up before the beetling walls of Fort Sumter, and had hurled solid shot for hours, with only the effect of breaking away sharp corners and projecting

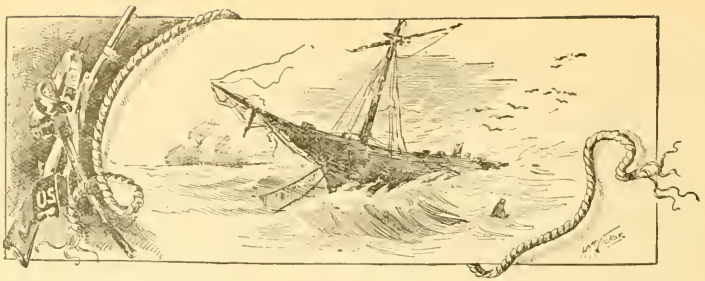
edges of the fort, but leaving it still as powerful a work of defence as ever. The little monitors exposed to the terrible fire from the guns of Sumter were fairly riddled; and, when the signal was finally made to withdraw from the action, the humblest sailor knew that Charleston would only fall after a siege as protracted and wearisome as that of Vicksburg.

The investment of Charleston lasted from the date of that first attack upon Fort Sumter until 1865. From time to time the war-vessels would throw a few shells into the city, as a reminder to the inhabitants that they were under surveillance. Early in the siege the Swamp Angel, as the big gun back in the swamp was called, began sending hourly messages, in the form of two-hundred-pound shells, into the city. In one quarter, where the shells fell thickest, a severe fire was started, which raged fiercely, driving people from their homes, and reducing whole blocks to ashes; while the deadly shells aided in the work of destruction. But the life of the Swamp Angel, whose shells were the most destructive, was but short; for, after a few days' work, it burst, scattering the sand-bags, of which the battery was built, far and wide over the swamp.

The officers of the army, who were bringing their troops nearer and nearer to the city, expected the iron-clad vessels to steam boldly up the harbor, and compel a surrender of the city; but the naval officers dared not, owing to the torpedoes with which the channel was thickly planted. If Sumter could only be captured, the torpedoes could be searched out and easily removed; and, with this thought in mind, a number of bold sailors fitted out an expedition to attack the fort. Thirty boats, filled with armed men, made their way to the base of the shattered walls of the fort. As they came up, not a sign of life was to be seen about the huge black monster that had so long kept the iron-clads at bay. Rapidly and silently the men swarmed from their boats, and, led by three brave officers, began the ascent of the sloping walls. "The Johnnies are asleep," they whispered to each other: "we have the fort this time." But the Johnnies were wide awake, and waiting behind those grim bastions until the proper moment should arrive. Higher and higher climbed the blue-jackets; and they were just about to spring over the last barrier, when there rose before them a wall of men and a deadly fire of musketry, and a storm of hand-grenades cut their ranks to pieces. Around the corner of the fort steamed a small gunboat, which opened fire on the assailants. The carnage was terrible; and the sailors

were driven back to their boats, leaving two hundred dead and wounded, and three stands of colors, as trophies for the garrison.

After that grapple with the giant fortress, the Federals did not again try to come to close quarters; but, keeping at a distance, maintained a steady fire upon the fort, which drove its defenders from the guns, and enabled the Union troops to throw up batteries upon all the neighboring islands. The fleet then remained on blockading-service until Feb. 18, 1865, when the Confederates evacuated the city, and left the fort to the victorious Federals. Five years after the date when Major Anderson with his little band of soldiers had marched out of Sumter, leaving the fort to the enemy, the same gallant officer returned, and with his own hand hoisted the same tattered flag over the almost ruined fortress, amid salvos of artillery and the cheers of a victorious army and navy.



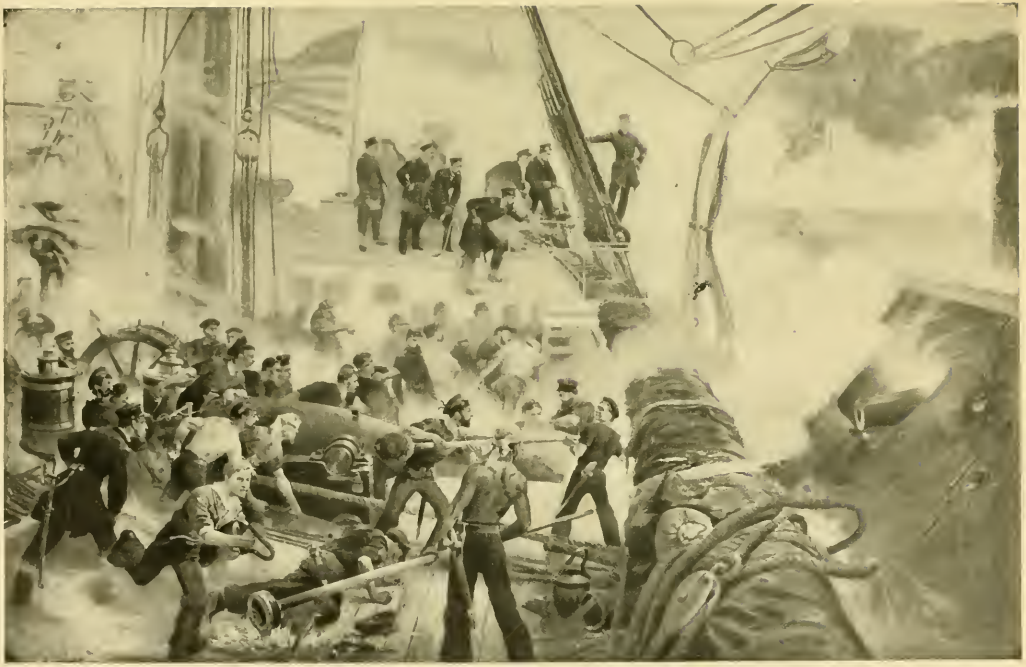
## CHAPTER XVIII.

### THE BATTLE OF MOBILE BAY.

THE last two actions of the United States navy in the civil war were destined to be the grandest successes of a long record of daring and successful exploits. Farragut at Mobile, and Porter at Fort Fisher, added to their wondrous careers the cap-sheaves of two victories wrested from apparently unconquerable adversaries.

It was on a bright August morning in 1864 that Admiral Farragut stood on the deck of his stanch frigate the "Hartford," that had borne him through so many desperate battles. Around the flag-ship were clustered the vessels of the Gulf squadron. There was the battered old "Brooklyn," scarred with the wounds of a dozen fights; the "Richmond" and the "Itasca," that received their baptism of fire at the fight below New Orleans. In all there were fourteen wooden vessels and four iron-clad monitors assembled in front of the strongest combination of harbor defences that war-ships ever yet dared attack. Yet Farragut was there that bright summer morning to enter that bay, and batter the forts of the enemy into subjection. To capture the city was not his purpose, — that he left to the army, — but the harbor forts and the great ram "Tennessee" must strike their colors to the navy.

Before arranging for the attack, the admiral made a reconnoissance, the



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ENGAGEMENT BETWEEN THE U. S. FLAGSHIP "HARTFORD" AND CONFEDERATE IRONCLAD "TENNESSEE," MOBILE BAY, AUGUST 5, 1864

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BATTLE OF MOBILE BAY—UNION FLEET ENGAGING FORT MORGAN AND CONFEDERATE VESSELS, AUGUST 5, 1864

results of which are thus told by one of his officers: "On the afternoon of the day of our arrival, Admiral Farragut, with the commanding officers of the different vessels, made a reconnoissance on the steam-tender 'Cowslip,' running inside of Sand Island, where the monitors were anchored, and near enough to get a good view of both forts. On the left, some two miles distant, was Fort Gaines, a small brick-and-earth work, mounting a few heavy guns, but too far away from the ship-channel to cause much uneasiness to the fleet. Fort Morgan was on the right, one of the strongest of the old stone forts, and greatly strengthened by immense piles of sand-bags covering every portion of the exposed front. The fort was well equipped with three tiers of heavy guns, some of them of the best English make, imported by the Confederates. In addition, there was in front a battery of eleven powerful guns, at the water's edge on the beach. All the guns, of both fort and water battery, were within point-blank range of the only channel through which the fleet could pass. The Rebels considered the works impregnable, but they did not depend solely upon them. Just around the point of land, behind Fort Morgan, we could see that afternoon three saucy-looking gunboats and the famous ram 'Tennessee.' The latter was then considered the strongest and most powerful iron-clad ever put afloat; looking like a great turtle, with sloping sides covered with iron plates six inches in thickness, thoroughly riveted together, and having a formidable iron beak projecting under the water. Her armament consisted of six heavy guns of English make, sending a solid shot weighing one hundred and ten pounds, — a small affair compared with the heavy guns of the present time, but irresistible then against every thing but the turrets of the monitors. In addition to these means of resistance, the narrow channel in front of the fort had been lined with torpedoes. These were under the water, anchored to the bottom, and were chiefly in the shape of beer-kegs filled with powder, from the sides of which projected numerous little tubes containing fulminate, which it was expected would be exploded by contact with the passing vessels.

"Except for what Farragut had already accomplished on the Mississippi, it would have been considered a foolhardy experiment for wooden vessels to attempt to pass so close to one of the strongest forts on the coast; but when to the forts were added the knowledge of the strength of the ram, and the supposed deadly character of the torpedoes, it may be imagined that the

coming event impressed the person taking his first glimpse of naval warfare as decidedly hazardous and unpleasant. So daring an attempt was never made in any country but this, and was never successfully made by any commander except Farragut, who in this, as in his previous exploits in passing the forts of the Mississippi, proved himself the greatest naval commander the world has ever seen. It was the confidence reposed in him, the recollection that he had never failed in any of his attempts, and his manifest faith in the success of the projected movement, that inspired all around him."

When the reconnoissance was completed, the admiral called a council of his captains in the ward-room of the "Hartford," and announced that the attack would be made early the following morning. The council over, each commander returned to his ship, there to make ready for the dread business of the morrow. The same writer whom we have before quoted tells how the night before a battle is spent by brave men not afraid of death: —

"At sunset the last order had been issued. Every commanding officer knew his duty, and unusual quiet prevailed in the fleet. The waters of the Gulf rested for a time from their customary tumult, a gentle breeze relieved the midsummer heat, and the evening closed upon us as peacefully as if we had been on board a yachting squadron at Newport. During the early part of the night, the stillness was almost oppressive. The officers of the 'Hartford' gathered around the capacious ward-room table, writing what they knew might be their last letters to loved ones far away, or giving to friends messages and instructions in case of death. There were no signs of fear; but, like brave and intelligent men, they recognized the stern possibilities of the morrow, and acted accordingly.

"But this occupied but little time; and then, business over, there followed an hour of unrestrained jollity. Many an old story was retold, and ancient conundrum repeated. Old officers forgot for the moment their customary dignity, and it was evident that all were exhilarated and stimulated by the knowledge of the coming struggle. Capt. Heywood of the marines proposed a final 'walk-around;' Tyson solemnly requested information as to 'Which would you rather do or go by Fort Morgan?' and all agreed they would prefer to 'do.' La Rue Adams repeated the benediction with which the French instructor at the naval academy was wont to greet his boys as they were going into examination: 'Vell, fellows,

I hope ve vill do as vell as I hope ve vill do.' Finally, Chief Engineer Williamson suggested an adjournment to the forecastle for a last smoke, and the smoking club went forward; but somehow smoke had lost its customary flavor, and, after a few whiffs, all hands turned in, to enjoy what sleep would come."

When the morning dawned, the men were called to quarters, and the advance upon the forts was begun at once. It was a foggy morning, and the ships looked like phantom vessels as they moved forward in line of battle, with the "Brooklyn" in the van. Second came the "Hartford," with the admiral high up in the rigging, where he could overlook the whole scene.

"Nearly every man had his watch in his hand, and waited for the first shot. To us, ignorant of every thing going on above, every minute seemed an hour; and there was a feeling of great relief when the boom of the first gun was heard. This was from the monitor 'Tecumseh,' at forty-seven minutes past six o'clock. Presently one or two of our forward guns opened, and we could hear the distant sound of the guns of the fort in reply. Soon the cannon-balls began to crash through the deck above us, and then the thunder of our whole broadside of twelve Dahlgren guns kept the vessel in a quiver. But as yet no wounded were sent down, and we knew we were still at comparatively long range. In the intense excitement of the occasion, it seemed that hours had passed; but it was just twenty minutes from the time we went below when an officer shouted down the hatchway: 'Send up an army signal-officer immediately: the 'Brooklyn' is signalling.' In a moment the writer was on deck, where he found the situation as follows: The 'Brooklyn,' directly in front of us, had stopped, and was backing and signalling; the tide was with us, setting strongly through the channel, and the stopping of the 'Brooklyn' threatened to bring the whole fleet into collision and confusion; the advance vessels of the line were trying to back to prevent a catastrophe, but were apparently not able to overcome the force of the current; and there was danger not only of collision, but of being drifted on shore."

While the fleet was thus embarrassed and hampered, the gunners in the forts were pouring in their shot thick and fast. On the decks of the ships the most terrible scenes of death were visible. Along the port side the bodies of the dead were ranged in long rows, while the wounded were carried

below, until the surgeon's room was filled to its last corner. One poor fellow on the "Hartford" lost both legs by a cannon-ball, and, falling, threw up both arms just in time to have them carried away also. Strange to say, he recovered from these fearful wounds.

Just as the fight was at its hottest, and the vessels were nearing the line, the passage of which meant victory, there went up a cry from the whole fleet, "The 'Tecumseh!' Look at the 'Tecumseh!'" All eyes were turned on the monitor, and every one saw that she was sinking. She staggered for a moment, and went down with a rush, carrying her brave commander and over a hundred of her crew. A few escaped, the last of whom was the pilot. As the pilot was rushing for the hatchway that led to the open air and to life, he met at the foot of a narrow ladder Commander Craven. Craven stepped back, saying gravely, "After you, pilot;" and the pilot passed out. "There was nothing after me," said he, in relating the story afterwards; "for as I sprang out of the hatchway the water rushed in, carrying all behind me to the bottom."

This terrible sight made the ships stop for a moment in some confusion; but Farragut signalled sternly from his flagship, "Go on," and all advanced again. As the fight grew fiercer, the admiral grew tired of being on the second ship in the line, and ordered the "Hartford" to forge ahead.

"On board a war steamer the engines are directed by the tap of a bell, the wires connected with which lead to the quarter-deck. One stroke of the bell means 'go ahead;' two, 'stop;' three, 'back;' and four, 'go ahead as fast as possible.' Leaning down through the shrouds to the officer on deck at the bell-pull, the admiral shouted, 'Four bells, *eight bells*, SIXTEEN BELLS! Give her all the steam you've got!' The order was instantly transmitted, and the old ship seemed imbued with the admiral's spirit; and running past the "Brooklyn" and the monitors, regardless of fort, ram, gunboats, and the unseen foe beneath, dashed ahead, all alone, save for her gallant consort, the "Metacomet.'"

But by this time the fleet was well abreast of the forts, and now, pouring out broadside after broadside, they swept along past the terrible ramparts. The Confederate gunboats had found the fight too hot for them, and had fled for shelter, with the exception of the dreaded "Tennessee," which seemed to be holding itself in reserve. It was but a short time before the vessels were safely past the fort, and out of range, floating on the smooth

waters of the inner bay. Then the crews were piped to breakfast, and all hands began to recount their narrow escapes.

But the end was not yet, for the ram "Tennessee" was now ready to try her mettle with the fleet. Lieut. Kinney of the "Hartford" tells graphically the story of the desperate fight that the ram carried on alone against the whole attacking flotilla.

"We were just beginning to feel the re-action following such a season of extreme peril and excitement, when we were brought to our senses by the sharp, penetrating voice of executive officer Kimberly calling all hands to quarters; and a messenger-boy hurried down to us with the word, 'The ram is coming.' Every man hastened to his post, the writer to the quarter-deck, where the admiral and fleet-captain were standing. The cause of the new excitement was evident at once. The 'Tennessee,' as if ashamed of her failure, had left the fort and was making at full speed directly for the "Hartford," being then perhaps a mile and a half distant. The spectacle was a grand one, and was viewed by the Rebel soldiers in both forts, who were now out of range of our guns, and lined the walls. Few audiences have ever witnessed so imposing a sight. The great ram came on for a single-handed contest with the fleet. She was believed to be invulnerable, and had powerful double engines by which she could be easily handled; while our monitors were so slow-gaited that they were unable to offer any serious obstacle to her approach. Farragut himself seemed to place his chief dependence on his wooden vessels. Doubtless the crowd of Confederate soldiers who watched the fight expected to see the 'Tennessee' sink the Yankee vessels in detail, and the chances seemed in its favor. . .

"Meanwhile, the general signal, 'Attack the enemy,' had gone up to the peak of the 'Hartford;' and there followed a general slipping of cables, and a friendly rivalry to see which could quickest meet the foe. The 'Monongahela,' with her artificial iron prow, was bravely in the lead, and struck the Rebel craft amidships at full speed, doing no damage to the ram, but having her own iron prow destroyed, and being otherwise injured. Next came the 'Lackawanna,' with a like result. The huge iron frame of the 'Tennessee' scarcely felt the shock, while the wooden bow of the Union ship was badly demoralized. For an instant the two vessels swung head and stern alongside of each other. In his official report, Capt. Marchand naïvely remarks: —

"'A few of the enemy were seen through their ports, who were using *most opprobrious* language. Our marines opened on them with muskets: even a spittoon and a holystone were thrown at them from our deck, which drove them away.'

"The 'Tennessee' fired two shots through her bow, and then kept on for the 'Hartford.' The two flag-ships approached each other, bow to bow. The two admirals, Farragut and Buchanan, had entered our navy together as boys, and up to the outbreak of the war had been warm friends. But now each was hoping for the overthrow of the other; and, had Buchanan possessed the grit of Farragut, it is probable that moment would have witnessed the destruction of both vessels. For had the ram struck us square, as it came, bows on, it would have ploughed its way half through the 'Hartford;' and, as we sank, we should have carried it to the bottom, unable to extricate itself. But the Rebel admiral was not desirous of so much glory; and, just as the two vessels were meeting, the course of the 'Tennessee' was slightly changed, enough to strike us only a glancing blow on the port-bow, which left us uninjured, while the two vessels grated past each other. He tried to sink us with a broadside as he went by; but only one of his guns went off, the primers in all the others failing. That gun sent a shell that entered the berth-deck of the 'Hartford,' and killed five men."

But by this time the unequal conflict was becoming too much even for a man of Buchanan's courage. The armor of the ram was penetrated in several places, and at last came a shot that almost fatally wounded her commander. With the controlling mind that guided her course gone, the ram was useless; and in a moment a white flag fluttered from the shattered stump of her flagstaff. And so closed the naval battle that effectually ended Confederate rule on the Gulf coast, and earned for Farragut his proudest laurels.

## CHAPTER XIX.

THE FALL OF FORT FISHER. — THE NAVY ENDS ITS WORK.

IN noticing the work of the blockading-fleet, we have spoken of the fine harbor of Wilmington, and the powerful works that defended its entrance. This Confederate stronghold was known as Fort Fisher, and had been for a long time a cause of anxiety and worry to the Northern authorities. The war had gone past Fort Fisher. To the north and to the south of it, the country was under the sway of the Federal authorities; but there in North Carolina stood the formidable bastions over which floated, in defiance of the laws of the Union, the stars and bars of the rapidly dying Confederacy. With its connected batteries, Fort Fisher mounted seventy-five guns, and was stronger than the celebrated Malakoff at Sebastopol.

To reduce this stronghold, a joint naval and military expedition was fitted out; and Gen. Butler was placed in command of the land forces, while Admiral Porter, torn from his beloved Western rivers, was given command of the fleet. Butler introduced a novel feature at the very opening of the siege. He procured an old steamer, and had her packed full of gunpowder. On a dark night this craft was towed close to the walls of the fort and set afire, in the hopes that she might, in blowing up, tear the works to pieces.

But in this the projectors were disappointed; for the explosion, though a terrific one, did absolutely no harm to the Confederate works. When Porter finally did get into the fort, he asked a soldier what he thought of the attempt to blow them up. "It was a mighty mean trick," responded the Southerner satirically. "You woke us all up."

After this fiasco had set all the world laughing, Butler retired voluntarily, and was succeeded by Gen. Terry; and on Christmas Eve of the year 1864 the fleet began the bombardment, although the land forces were not yet prepared for the assault. It was the grandest armada that was ever arrayed against any fortress. The thunder of nearly five hundred guns rent the air on that Christmas Eve, when carols were being sung in Christian churches throughout the world. Tremendous as was the cannonade, the earthworks were almost a match for it. The fort was not a mass of masonry that these enormous guns might batter down and crumble into rubbish, but a huge bank of earth in which the shells might harmlessly bury themselves. But five hundred cannon are more than a match for any fort, and so they soon proved to be in this instance. Earthworks, guns, and men alike went down before them. The iron-clads were stationed about three-quarters of a mile from the fort, a little farther out were the frigates and heavy sloops, and still beyond were the smaller vessels, — all firing to cover themselves; and all along the whole extended line there blazed one almost continuous sheet of flame, while the rolling thunder of the broadsides, and the defiant answering roar from the guns of the forts, shook earth and sea. Clouds of dust went up from the bastions of the fort, and mingled with the floating smoke above. Within the forts, there was a scene of the most terrible confusion: guns were overturned, piles of cannon-balls were knocked to pieces and scattered about, and two magazines were blown up and scattered fragments all over the parade. In one hour and a quarter all the gunners were driven to the bomb-proofs, and the forts were silenced, not returning a single shot.

On Christmas morning Gen. Terry arrived with all his transports, and the attack was recommenced. Early in the morning the ships fell into position and began a slow fire, merely to cover the landing of the troops. Again the garrison was driven to the bomb-proofs; and, indeed, so entirely were they chased from their posts, that a Federal soldier went into the fort and brought off a Confederate flag without ever having been seen

by the garrison. All the troops were landed; but for some reason the attack was deferred, much to the disgust of the officers of the fleet, who felt sure that the fort could be taken then by a dash. But the troops returned to their transports or went into camp, and it was not until weeks after that the assault was fairly made. In the mean time, the ships rode out the winter gales at their anchors, doing a little desultory firing to keep the garrison in a state of unrest.

On the 14th of January the heavy bombardment began again, and again the troops were landed. By night it was seen that every gun on the face of the fort was disabled, and it was decided to storm the works the next day. Sixteen hundred sailors and four hundred marines were told off as the storming-party.

Early in the morning the ships began a fierce cannonade, under cover of which the sailors and marines landed, and threw up light breastworks to cover them until the time should be ripe for the charge. The arrangements contemplated a fierce charge by the blue-jackets, armed with their cutlasses and revolvers; while the marines, remaining in the rifle-pits, should cover the advancing party with a hot fire of musketry. The soldiers from the army-camp were to charge the fort on the other side.

At three o'clock came the signal that all was ready. The whistles of the ships rent the air; and the blue-jackets, with ringing cheers, dashed in a compact body up the beach. But in an instant the Confederate ramparts were black with men, and a furious fire of musketry rained down upon the sailors, who were helpless. The marines in the rifle-pits failed to do what was expected of them, and the sailors halted for a moment in surprise.

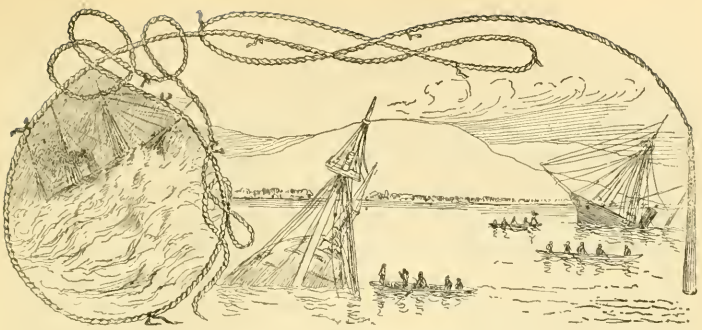
As they stood, a most destructive fire rained down upon them; and the poor fellows, grasping their useless cutlasses, turned and fled down the beach, leaving great heaps of dead and wounded behind. Then the Confederates, thinking the day was theirs, sprang on the ramparts, and began a vigorous cheer just as the Union soldiers came pouring over the landward face of the fort. Then ensued a fierce hand-to-hand fight that lasted for hours. The blue-jackets, encouraged, rushed back to the fight, and now at close quarters swung their cutlasses with deadly effect, until step by step the Confederates were driven out of the fort. Then the fleet opened upon them, and they fled for dear life while a sailor sprang to the flagstaff and pulled down the Confederate flag. Fort Fisher had fallen.

It was a noble victory, and formed a fitting climax to the work of the navy throughout that great war.

With the fall of Fort Fisher, the navy ceased to be a prominent factor in the war. Its work was done. Along the seacoast, and inland as far as navigable rivers extended, the ships of the North had carried the starry banner; and the sailor-boys of the North had defended it. And their opponents, whether on sea or shore, had shown themselves courageous and dashing, and worthy to be numbered as men of the same nation as those who proved the victors. And who can doubt, that, should the need arise, the sons of these men will show that they have in their veins the blood that animated the Blue-Jackets of '61?

# PART IV

## BLUE JACKETS IN TIMES OF PEACE



## CHAPTER I.

POLICE SERVICE ON THE HIGH SEAS.—WAR SERVICE IN ASIATIC PORTS.—LOSSES BY THE PERILS OF THE DEEP.—A BRUSH WITH THE PIRATES.—ADMIRAL RODGERS AT COREA.—SERVICES IN ARCTIC WATERS.—THE DISASTER AT SAMOA.—THE ATTACK ON THE "BALTIMORE'S" MEN AT VALPARAISO.—LOSS OF THE "KEARSARGE."—THE NAVAL REVIEW.

THE years immediately following the civil war were particularly quiet and uneventful for the navy. The department was chiefly engaged in the work of reducing the forces and adapting the navy to the changed conditions. At the termination of the war an immense naval armament had been developed, and the navy had assumed a magnitude which made the United States foremost among the naval powers. This force was gradually reduced to a peace standard. The volunteers were discharged and retired from service. The large number of captured and purchased vessels were disposed of. The home squadrons were withdrawn, and squadrons established abroad. The ships in foreign stations displayed an unprecedented energy and activity, visiting, in 1866, nearly every large port in the world, including several in China which had never before been entered by an American man-of-war. The reception of Rear-Admiral Bell in his flagship, the "Hartford," by the Japanese, was manifestly more hospitable than that given to any other nation. Admiral Farragut was made commander of the European squadron

in 1867, and he was received with distinguished attention by the sovereigns and dignitaries of Europe. The "Swatara," of the European squadron, was ordered, in November, 1866, to Civita Vecchia, a port in Italy, to bring to the United States John H. Surratt, who was charged with being implicated in the assassination of Lincoln. The fugitive was apprehended, but he escaped, and fled into the papal dominions. He was recaptured at Alexandria, and in February was delivered to the marshal of the District of Columbia.

The Japanese made further advances of a friendly character toward the United States in 1867, when the "Shenandoah," of the Asiatic squadron, with the American minister aboard, arrived at the port of Hakodadi, and the first salute ever given in honor of a foreign minister was fired. Just previous to this, the Japanese government had expressed its willingness to open an additional port on the western coast to foreign trade, and Commodore Goldsborough, in command of the "Shenandoah," visited and made surveys of several harbors in which no foreign ship had ever before anchored.

News was received by Rear-Admiral Bell, in the autumn of 1866, that the schooner "General Sherman" had been wrecked in the Ping Yang River, one of the streams of Corea, and that her officers, crew, and passengers had been murdered by the natives. The Rear-Admiral despatched one of the vessels of his squadron, the "Wachusett," to investigate the matter, and demand from the authorities that the survivors, if any, be delivered on board the "Wachusett." The King of Corea was communicated with, but without satisfactory results. It was found that there were no survivors of the schooner. A few months afterward information reached Rear-Admiral Bell that a similar outrage had been perpetrated on the southeast end of the island of Formosa. It was reported that the American bark "Rover" had been wrecked, and all on board murdered. Commander Febiger, with the "Ashuelot," found that the crime had been committed by a horde of savages, who, the authorities of the island said, were not obedient to their laws. Rear-Admiral Bell left Shanghai in June, with the "Wyoming" and "Hartford," with the intention of destroying, if possible, the lurking-places of the savages. On the 18th of June the vessels anchored half a mile from shore, and 181 officers, sailors, and marines were landed, under the command of Commander Belknap, of the "Hartford," and Lieutenant-Commander Alexander S. Mackenzie. As the company approached the hills the natives,

dressed in clouts, with their bodies painted, and muskets glistening in the sun, descended to meet them, fighting from the long grass. After delivering their fire, they would retreat, and form ambuscades, into which the men from the ships frequently fell in charging after them. In one of these Lieutenant-Commander Mackenzie was mortally wounded. After fighting under the intensely hot sun for six hours, during which period several of the attacking party suffered sunstroke, they returned to their ships, the expedition having proved a failure.

The navy performed a valuable maritime service in 1867, by locating and surveying a shoal which was reported to exist twenty miles west of Georges Shoal, and directly in the track of vessels bound to and from Europe. The shoal was found by Commander Chandler with the United States steamer "Don," and mariners were made cognizant of a danger which probably had been fatal to many vessels. In the same year the "Sacramento," Captain Napoleon Collins, while on an important cruise, was wrecked on the reefs off the mouth of the Kothapalem River in the Bay of Bengal. The vessel proved a total wreck, but without loss of life. Those aboard effected thrilling escapes by means of rafts. The navy suffered another misfortune in 1868, in the drowning of Rear-Admiral Bell, commander of the Asiatic squadron, Lieutenant-Commander J. H. Reed, and ten of the crew of the Admiral's barge, which was upset in crossing the bar near Osaka, few days after the opening by the Japanese of that port and Hioto to foreigners. Another disaster occurred in 1869. Twenty-seven officers and men of the "Fredonia" were drowned at Arica, on the western coast of South America. The "Fredonia" and "Wateree" were resting at anchor when a shock of earthquake was felt. The sea receded and left the former vessel on the bottom; a moment afterward the wave rolled back, breaking the ship into fragments. The "Wateree" was thrown upon the shore; its position was such that the expense of launching would have been greater than the worth of the vessel, and it was consequently sold. A year previous to its catastrophe, the "Monongahela," in the harbor of St. Croix, was swept from her moorings by the force of an earthquake, and carried by a wave over the warehouses into one of the streets of the town. Five of her crew were lost. The vessel, after an interval of some months, was relaunched.

The Cuban rebellion, which began in 1868, occasioned activity on the

part of some of the cruisers to prevent violations of the neutrality law and to protect the interests of American citizens. A company of Cuban filibusters, encamped on Gardiner's Island, near the eastern end of Long Island, were captured by Lieutenant Breese, in command of the revenue cutter "Mahoning," and fifty marines. The prisoners, to the number of one hundred and twenty-five, were taken to New York. On the island of Cuba some outrages were perpetrated upon American citizens by the Spanish authorities. Rear-Admiral Hoff, in command of the North Atlantic squadron, was ordered to Santiago de Cuba for the better protection of American interests, and no further aggressions occurred.

Two disasters in the navy ushered in the year 1870. In the Bay of Yeddo, on January 24th, the steam-sloop "Oneida," just after leaving Yokohama for Hong Kong, was run into and sunk by the English steamer "Bombay," with the loss of twenty officers and ninety-six men. The tug "Marie" was sunk in the same month, with a loss of four men, in Long Island Sound. In October of the same year, Commander Sicard of the "Saginaw" determined to run to Ocean Island, a small island about a hundred miles west of the Midways, to rescue any sailors who might have been shipwrecked there. The "Saginaw" was herself wrecked on a reef off the perilous coast, but her men, after extreme exertions, landed safely on the shores of the uninhabited island. Here they lived for some months. They were rescued by a steamer from the Sandwich Islands, sent to their aid by the authorities of the islands, who had been informed of the accident by William Halford, one of the crew, who, with Lieutenant Talbot and three others, had volunteered to make the trip from Ocean Island to Honolulu, a distance of 1,500 miles, in an open boat. After thirty-one days of great danger and hardship, they arrived off one of the Hawaiian group of islands. In attempting to land, the boat was upset in the surf, and all but Halford were drowned.

At various times during the years 1871 and 1872, the marines of the Brooklyn Navy Yard rendered very efficient aid to the revenue officers in quelling riots in Brooklyn which grew out of the raiding of illicit distilleries. In July, 1871, Captain Gilbert was killed and several men wounded by the rioters.

The steamer "Forward," bearing the San Salvador flag, landed 200 desperadoes at Guaymas, Mexico, in June, 1870, and these outlaws took pos-

session of the custom-house. They forced the foreign merchants to furnish them with funds and goods, and compelled the United States' consul to supply coal for their vessel, their purpose being to become pirates on a large scale. Commander Low, of the "Mohican," upon learning these facts, sailed from Mazatlan, and overtook the "Forward" while still in the Gulf of California. She was attacked in the harbor of Boca Teacapan by six boat-loads of sailors and marines from the "Mohican," and was captured and burned.

It seemed desirable, in 1871, that some arrangement should be made with the people of Corea whereby sailors wrecked upon these shores should have protection. With this end in view our Minister to China, accompanied by Rear-Admiral John Rodgers, with the "Colorado," the "Alaska," the "Benicia," the "Monocacy," and the "Palos," vessels of the Asiatic squadron, sailed to Corea, anchoring in the Sale River. The local authorities were assured that the visit was a perfectly peaceful one, and they in turn gave evidences of a peaceful spirit. But when a party engaged in making surveys and soundings for the safety of commerce had got beyond a point where they could be protected by the cruisers' guns, they were fired upon the Coreans, and were forced to re-pass the Corean forts under a fierce cannonade. Admiral Rodgers and the minister determined that an explanation should be at once demanded. No answer having been received from the Coreans after an interval of ten days, it was decided that an attack should be made upon the forts from which the shots had been fired. A party of about 700 of the sailors and marines were landed, and after a march through mud which rose to their knees, the first fort was captured without serious resistance. The next day, other forts were easily taken, and preparations were made to attack the horseshoe-shaped citadel, which was defended by a garrison of a thousand Corean soldiers. A few shells from the vessels, judiciously planted among the Coreans, frightened and disconcerted them; but they made a stubborn fight until their ammunition gave out. The attacking party swarmed over the walls. Then ensued a desperate hand-to-hand fight The Coreans expected no quarter, and fought till all who had not fled had been killed or wounded. Lieutenant Hugh McKee, who was the first man to climb over the ramparts, fell with a mortal wound. Two hundred and forty-seven dead Coreans were counted within the works. Five forts and a

large number of flags and cannon had been captured. The gallant conduct of the men of the navy made a deep impression on the people of the China coast and led to the increased consideration and safety of American citizens in those localities.

On Saturday morning, November 26, 1877, occurred one of the most disastrous wrecks in the history of the navy. The steam sloop-of-war "Huron" struck the rocks near Oregon Inlet, North Carolina, in a heavy gale and was wrecked, with the loss of nearly a hundred officers and men. The boats were washed from the davits and the thirty-four persons who were saved reached the shore by swimming. Ensign Lucien Young landed on the beach after desperate efforts, and spread the alarm. His sturdy activity resulted in the saving of several lives.

The members of a naval exploring expedition, which had sailed in the "Polaris" for the Arctic regions in 1871, were rescued from boats and the floating ice in Baffin's Bay in 1873, the "Polaris" having been abandoned as a wreck.

The United States steamer "Rodgers," commanded by Lieutenant Robert M. Berry, was detailed in 1881 to search for the exploring party organized by James Gordon Bennett and headed by Lieutenant-Commander DeLong, which had embarked in the "Jeannette" for the far north and had been last heard of in August, 1879. The "Rodgers" was burned and abandoned in St. Laurence Bay, Siberia, in November, 1881; but Lieutenant Berry continued his search on the coast. In the early spring he learned that one party from the "Jeannette," that of Chief-Engineer Melville, had been saved and was searching for the other two parties which had become separated from the first in a storm while attempting to escape from the Arctic seas in open boats after the "Jeannette" had been crushed and sunk by the ice. Lieutenant Berry soon afterward met Chief-Engineer Melville's party and learned that the bodies of Lieutenant DeLong and his companions had been found. Search for the other party which had been led by Lieutenant Chipp was continued, and the Navy Department fitted out another vessel, the "Alliance," to aid in the possible rescue. But Lieutenant Chipp and his men were never found.

During the massacres by Egyptian troops under Arabi Pasha in Alexandria, in 1882, when more than two hundred European residents were killed or

wounded, the flagship "Lancaster," under Captain Gherardi, was in the harbor and afforded a place of refuge for large numbers of men, women, and children. A large body of marines with a detachment of naval artillery landed in the city and were of much service in restoring order.

Another Arctic expedition was fitted out in the spring of 1883. Three vessels, the "Thetis," "Alert," and "Bear," left New York by order of the Navy Department to search for Lieutenant Greely and his party, comprising what is known as the Lady Franklin Bay Expedition. After a long voyage, in which the vessels were several times in imminent peril, they passed around Cape Sabine and found Lieutenant Greely and the seven survivors of his party. Their condition was so enfeebled that they could have lived only a little longer. On August 8th the relief squadron and the rescued part arrived in New York.

An insurrection broke out in the United States of Colombia in the spring of 1885, during which the city of Aspinwall was in great part destroyed. The affair assumed such a serious aspect that the vessels of the North Atlantic squadron, under Rear Admiral Jouett, were ordered to Aspinwall, and in addition to the fleet, the Navy Department sent a force consisting of about seven hundred and fifty from New York, for the special purpose of operating on shore. Upon his arrival at Aspinwall, on April 10th, Rear-Admiral Jouett issued orders for the landing of a force to open the transit across the isthmus, and on the 12th, trains were run as usual. On April 28th, the insurgents capitulated, and shortly afterward the United States naval force was withdrawn.

One of the most severe disasters that ever befell the United States Navy in time of peace occurred on the 16th of March, 1889, when, during a hurricane in the harbor of Apia, Samoa, the "Trenton" and "Vandalia" were totally wrecked, and the "Nipsic" was run on shore to save her from destruction. Five officers and forty-six men lost their lives in this catastrophe. Nothing that skill and experience could suggest was left undone to avert the disaster, but the vessels were equipped with old-fashioned engines, whose steam-power was not strong enough to withstand the fury of the gale. The value of high-pressure engines in war vessels was illustrated by the British ship "Calliope," which was able to steam out to sea, and thus escaped destruction on the reefs. The "Trenton" and the "Vandalia," which had been two of the best of the old wooden fleet, were abandoned. The "Nipsic"

sailed for the Sandwich Islands, where she was refitted for active service. The natives of Samoa displayed great heroism in their efforts to save the shipwrecked sailors, and were afterward rewarded by the United States government. Fifteen merchant vessels which were in the harbor were either sunk or run upon the shore, and the German naval vessels "Elber," "Adler," and "Olga" were wrecked, with the loss of many men.

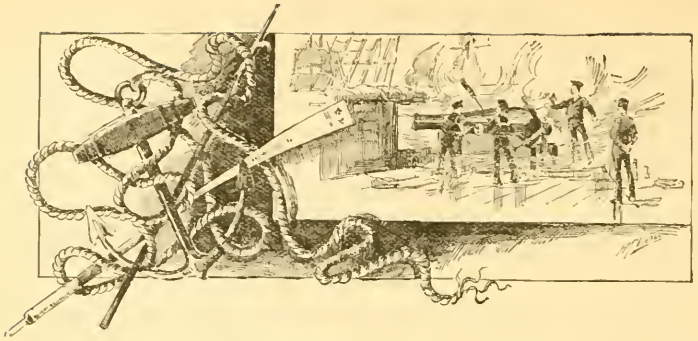
When the United States cruiser "Baltimore" was at anchor in the harbor off Valparaiso in October, 1891, shortly after the end of a Chilian rebellion, a number of the seamen were given liberty to go on shore. They were attacked by a mob in the streets of Valparaiso, and Petty Officer Charles Riggin was stabbed, and left to die. Another petty officer, Johnson, went to his assistance, and was attempting to carry him to an apothecary, when a squad of Chilian police, with fixed bayonets, came down the street. When at close quarters, they fired at Johnson. A shot passed through his clothes, and another entered Riggin's neck, inflicting a death-wound. Petty Officer Hamilton was dragged to jail dangerously wounded. As a result of the attack, two men, Riggin and Turnbull, died, and eighteen others were disabled by wounds. Thirty-six of the "Baltimore's" men were arrested, and treated by the Chilian police with extreme brutality. Investigation proved that all had been perfectly sober and well-behaved. The attack grew out of the bitter hostility of the Chilians toward the United States—a feeling largely due to false accusations in reference to the action of the navy during the Chilian revolution. The affair caused excitement and indignation in the United States, but was amicably settled.

The most important assemblage of naval vessels ever seen in the waters of America took place in April, 1893, in celebration of the Columbian quadricentennial. Invitations had been sent to all the important maritime powers, and at the rendezvous in Hampton Roads, on April 24th, the combined fleet, under the direction of Rear-Admiral Gherardi, of the United States Navy, comprised twelve men-of-war of the United States, four of England, three of France, two of Italy, two of Germany, two of Russia, three of Brazil, and one of Holland. At New York, the squadron was joined by one more Russian, three Spanish, one Argentine vessel, and the "Miantonomoh," of the United States Navy, making a combined fleet of thirty-five ships-of-war. The President, on board the "Dolphin," reviewed the fleet

on April 27th, and the next day the armed battalions of the various nations, to the number of 3,815 men, marched through the streets of New York, and were reviewed by the Governor of the State.

The navy suffered a severe loss in 1894, in the wreck of the famous old man-of-war "Kearsarge," the conqueror of the "Alabama," which was wrecked February 2d on Roncador Reef, while on her way from Port au Prince to Bluefields, Nicaragua. Eight days later her men were rescued by the "City of Para."

One of the conspicuous features of the pageants which attended the opening of the Kiel Canal, between the North and the Baltic seas, on June 19th, 1895, was the fleet of war-vessels which assembled in the harbor at Kiel. It was the most remarkable ever seen in any waters, numbering over a hundred of the finest vessels in existence. A number of these, headed by the flagship "New York," belonged to the new navy of the United States. These ships provoked the admiration of all the naval authorities present, and their effective strength was noted and commented upon all over Europe.



## CHAPTER II.

THE NAVAL MILITIA.—A VOLUNTEER SERVICE WHICH IN TIME OF WAR WILL BE EFFECTIVE.—HOW BOYS ARE TRAINED FOR THE LIFE OF A SAILOR.—CONDITIONS OF ENLISTMENT IN THE VOLUNTEER BRANCH OF THE SERVICE.—THE WORK OF THE SEAGOING MILITIA IN SUMMER.

THE *personnel* of a navy is quite as important as its vessels. It has been said that a ship is worth what her captain and crew are worth. It is certainly true that a man-of-war, of whatever power, would be useless or worse than useless if her officers and men did not understand her wonderfully complicated construction nor know how to handle her. The officers of the United States navy are given this important instruction at the Naval Academy at Annapolis, and the rank and file of the men of the navy, those who fill the positions of seamen and petty officers, are trained at the station in Coaster's Island Harbor, near Newport, R. I., and in the training-ships when cruising.

The training-station is designed to ensure the thorough efficiency of the corps of men enlisted in the service, and to provide for the manning of the vessels by American citizens instead of by foreigners.

There was a time, and not a great while ago, when the gunners and crews of United States men-of-war were, with very few exceptions, aliens, who spoke the English language with difficulty, and who did not have, and could not be expected to have, any of the patriotic spirit which makes effective fighters in naval engagements. While this condition still exists to

some extent, the growth of the apprentice system is bringing about a gradual change.

As early as 1837 an attempt was made to establish a naval apprentice system. In that year Congress passed an act making it "lawful to enlist boys for the navy, not under thirteen nor over eighteen years of age, to serve until twenty-one." Within a few months several boys were received as apprentices aboard naval vessels. Six years later, however, the system was abandoned as a failure, owing to a false impression which had gained wide currency that the apprentices would receive commissions in the navy.

Capt. S. B. Luce and the officers of the practice-ship "Macedonian" investigated the apprentice systems at Portsmouth and Plymouth, England, twenty years afterward, and made such favorable reports that Secretary Welles was induced to revive it in the United States navy. This was done, and during the civil war the system was in successful operation, but soon after the close of the war it was again abandoned.

In the following years the want of intelligent seamen of American birth in the navy was greatly felt, and in 1875 Secretary of the Navy Robeson deemed it advisable to resume the enlistment of boys under the naval apprentice law, which was still in existence. As an experiment two hundred and fifty boys were enlisted and placed on the frigates "Minnesota" and "Constitution" and the sloops of war "Portsmouth" and "Saratoga," which were commissioned as training-ships. Since 1875 the training-station and vessels have been very important features of the naval establishment.

The regulations governing the enlistment of boys are simple and few in number. The boys must be between the ages of fourteen and sixteen years, of robust form, intelligent, of perfectly sound and healthy constitution, free from all physical defect or malformation, and of good moral character. They must be able to read and write, although in special cases, when a boy shows general intelligence and is otherwise qualified, he may be enlisted notwithstanding the fact that his reading and writing are imperfect. Each boy presenting himself for enlistment must be accompanied by his father, mother, or, in case neither is living, by his legally appointed guardian, and must voluntarily sign an agreement to serve in the navy till twenty-one years of age. Upon enlistment the boys are rated as third-class apprentices, and are paid $9 a month. Deserving boys are rated second-class apprentices, and

receive pay of $15 a month after they have completed their term of service on a cruising training-ship. If they have served a year on a cruising ship of war they are considered properly qualified apprentices, and receive $21 a month. As the apprentices become proficient and their services are required, they are transferred to the seagoing vessels. Upon the expiration of the enlistment of an apprentice he will, if recommended, receive an honorable discharge, and if he enlists again within three months, will be given pay for this period. The apprentices are under the immediate supervision of the Bureau of Navigation of the Navy Department, and applications for enlistment are made to the chief of that bureau at Washington, or to the officer commanding either the "Vermont," at the Brooklyn navy yard, or the "Richmond," stationed at the League Island yard, Philadelphia. These were the recruiting-ships, from which the boys were being sent to the training-station at Coaster's Island as soon as a squad of twenty were enlisted, at the period of this writing. Sometimes there have been more ships in this duty.

There are usually about one hundred boys at the station at one time. They are taught to march, handle muskets, revolvers, broadswords, and cannon; they go aloft so as to get practice with the sails, and are also made familiar with the management of boats and oars and boathooks. Two hours a day are devoted to lessons, consisting of arithmetic, reading, writing, spelling, geography, and grammar. Ample time is given for recreation, and innocent social pleasures are encouraged.

There are two training-ships, besides the famous old ship "Constellation," which figured in the War of 1812, at the station devoted to the use of the boys, and every six months one of these appears at Coaster's Island, and receives the apprentices who have been at the station for half a year. The vessel then starts on a cruise to Europe if it is summer, and to the West Indies in the winter. Each boy remains aboard a year, only half of the crew being changed at a time. Practice aloft and the life in general aboard a sailing vessel give him a broad general foundation of knowledge of the sea and ships, upon which he can build the special training and instruction he afterward gets upon a regular man-of-war. When he is transferred, upon the expiration of his year on the training-ship, he begins the task of mastering the intricacies of a modern ship-of-war. Here he remains until his first

term of service has expired. If he re-enlists and has shown aptitude for the service, he is sent to Washington navy yard for a course of six months' instruction in gunnery and special branches, such as electricity and torpedoes. He becomes a seaman gunner, with the billet and pay of a petty officer.

A serious defect in the apprentice system, however, and one which makes it impossible to man the vessels altogether with well-trained American citizens, is the fact that the majority of the apprentices do not re-enlist after receiving their honorable discharge at the age of twenty-one, for the reason that the special training they have received enables them to secure better-paid places in civil life than are possible to them in the navy. In the government service, too, they cannot attain the rank of officers, as there is no such provision for the promotion of enlisted men in the navy as there is in the army.

Secretary Tracy, in his report of 1889, forcibly called the attention of Congress to this condition. As a remedy he recommended that there be a statutory extension of the term of enlistment to twenty-four years of age. It was further recommended that the number of apprentices be increased from seven hundred and fifty to fifteen hundred, and that the course in the training-ships be extended by the formation of a special class for training in gunnery on board a ship devoted exclusively to this purpose. Congress has as yet taken no action upon these and numerous other recommendations which have been made for the improvement of the apprentice system, and they remain pertinent.

The navy, however, in case of war, would not have to depend entirely upon apprentices and graduates of the training-station for its skilled seamen. The Naval Militia has become an organization that would render very efficient service if called upon by the government. It is composed of about three thousand highly intelligent and well-drilled young men, and has been organized in sixteen States. It bears the same relation to the navy that the National Guard does to the regular army, and is therefore wholly under State control; but it is subject to call, of course, by the federal government.

The organization of the Naval Militia has been a growth of the last eight years, and is due in large measure to the reconstruction of the navy and the revival of activity and interest in naval affairs in the United States.

It was seen that the new vessels of modern and intricate construction and

appliances should, in case of war, be manned by men skilled in the use of these appliances. The apprentice system brought to the navy a supply of apprentices, but the number would be totally inadequate in a naval war. A naval reserve force was an urgent necessity.

The first step toward meeting this necessity was made in 1887 by Senator Whitthorne, of Tennessee, who in that year introduced a bill "to create a naval reserve of auxiliary cruisers, officers, and men, from the mercantile marine of the United States." The measure did not pass, and the next year another was introduced by Senator Whitthorne, providing for the enrolment of a Naval Militia and the organization of naval reserve forces. According to this bill, it was to be lawful for States and Territories bordering on sea and lake coasts and navigable rivers to enroll and designate as the Naval Militia all seafaring men of whatever calling or occupation, and all men engaged in the navigation of the rivers, lakes, and other waters, or in the construction or management of ships and craft, together with ship-owners and their employees, yacht-owners, members of yacht clubs and other associations for aquatic sports, and all ex-officers and former enlisted men of the navy.

The bill contemplated a naval reserve artillery and a naval reserve torpedo corps. It did not become a law, but formed a basis for legislation in several of the States shortly afterward, although the original plan, as shown in the proposed measure, was modified to the extent of making the Naval Militia a State organization and forming it of volunteers irrespective of occupation.

Massachusetts was the pioneer among the States in the organization of the Naval Militia. In May, 1888, the legislature passed a bill authorizing the formation of "a naval battalion to be attached to the volunteer militia." This measure was prepared, with the assistance of others, by Lieutenant John C. Soley, a retired officer of the United States navy, and he was afterward energetic in putting it into successful operation.

The next State to provide for a Naval Militia was Pennsylvania, whose legislature made the necessary law in 1889. On the same day the legislature of Rhode Island "established a naval battalion to be attached to the Rhode Island militia." In New York, in 1889, a State Naval Militia of three battalions of naval reserve artillery and a naval reserve torpedo corps, to consist of not less than four companies to a battalion, was established.

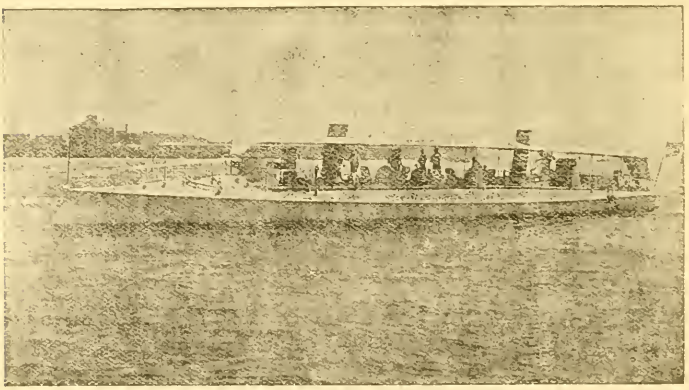
The practical work of the Naval Militia began in 1890, when the Massachusetts battalion drilled on the receiving-ship "Wabash," and the New York battalion on the receiving-ship "Minnesota."

A very decided impetus was given to the movement in 1891 by the appropriation by Congress of $25,000 for arms and equipments for the Naval Militia, leaving the disbursement of the money to the discretion of the Secretary of the Navy. Within the year California, North Carolina, Texas, and Maryland joined the States having battalions of Naval Militia, and at its close the force numbered 1,149 men. Progress was made also in 1891 in the method of drilling and instructing the members of some of the battalions. Those of New York, Massachusetts, and Rhode Island spent several days aboard the vessels of the Squadron of Evolution, under the command of Rear-Admiral J. C. Walker, and were given practice with the guns and boats, and participated in the ship's routine duties.

Further appropriations of $25,000 each for the Naval Militia were made in 1892 and 1893. The legislatures of Vermont and South Carolina provided for battalions of the Naval Militia in 1892, and those which had been authorized, but not yet organized, in Maryland and Pennsylvania, were formed. During the summer of 1892 the members of the North Carolina Naval Militia were drilled on board the "Newark." The "Wabash," the "Chicago," and the "Atlanta" were used for drills by the Massachusetts battalions, and those of New York received their instruction on the "New Hampshire," the "Chicago," and the "Atlanta." The California Naval Militia drilled on board the "Charleston."

The Naval Militia was increased in 1893 by battalions formed in North Carolina, Michigan, Illinois, Georgia, and Connecticut, under laws of these various legislatures of that year, and the force numbered 2,376 officers and men. New Jersey and Virginia, in 1894, organized battalions of the Naval Militia, and in that year Congress passed an important act, empowering the Secretary of the Navy to lend temporarily to any State vessels "not suitable or required for the general service, together with such of her apparel, charts, books, and instruments of navigation as he may deem proper, said vessel to be used only by the regularly organized Naval Militia of the State for the purposes of drill and instruction." Even interior States, with no bodies of water other than rivers, have organized naval battalions. At Pittsburg the

organization owns a small armored gunboat, of the sort that was so useful on inland waters in the civil war. This vessel was presented to the militia by a wealthy manufacturer. Few commands, however, are so fortunate. Most take advantage of the law authorizing the loan of government ships. Under this law the following vessels were lent: the "Minnesota" to Massachusetts, the "Wyandotte" to Connecticut, the "New Hampshire" to New York, the "Portsmouth" and the "Ajax" to New Jersey, the "St. Louis" to Pennsylvania, the "Dale" to Maryland, and the "Nantucket" to North Caro-



TORPEDO BOAT "CUSHING."

lina. The other States have been compelled to get along without vessels, for the reason that there have been no others available.

During the summer of 1894 the Massachusetts brigade of the militia encamped for drill on Lovell's Island, Boston Harbor, and the monitor "Passaic" was lent to the State. There were also drills and target-practice on the "Miantonomoh" and the "Atlanta." The forces of Connecticut and Rhode Island received instruction on the "Miantonomoh" and the "Atlanta" respectively, and New York's battalion spent a week on board the "New York" and the "San Francisco" in Gardiner's Bay, Long Island. A part of the Pennsylvania force had target-practice at sea on board the "New York," and the North Carolina battalion received instruction on the "Montgomery."

The California division helped to man the "Olympia" for a week in 1895, taking the places of the crew; the Maryland contingent had a week's cruise on the "Dale," and the First Naval Battalion of New York carried out a scheme of reconnoissance and distant boat work along the northern shore of Long Island, encamping on Shelter Island. The party was accompanied by the torpedo boat "Cushing." Most of the other battalions had their quota of drill and instruction.

These details of the summer operations of the Naval Militia will convey an idea of the manner in which its members are being prepared for the emergencies of war. In addition to the summer work, there is drill in armories in the winter. This course of training, in conjunction with the intelligence and enthusiasm of the young men of the Naval Militia, who are of the best classes in this country, has made an organization which would doubtless be of very great value in time of war.

The uniform of the Naval Militia consists of a blue cap, blouse, and trousers of blue trimmed with white braid. The working suit is of white duck with white canvas hat.

## CHAPTER III.

HOW THE NAVY HAS GROWN.—THE COST AND CHARACTER OF OUR NEW WHITE SHIPS OF WAR.—OUR PERIOD OF NAVAL WEAKNESS AND OUR ADVANCE TO A PLACE AMONG THE GREAT NAVAL POWERS.—THE NEW DEVICES OF NAVAL WARFARE. THE TORPEDO, THE DYNAMITE GUN, AND THE MODERN RIFLE.—ARMOR AND ITS POSSIBILITIES.

AT the close of the civil war the United States had one of the most formidable navies afloat. The necessities of the war had forced the Navy Department to the utmost exertion in increasing the number and power of the vessels of the fleets. This work of naval upbuilding and strengthening had been carried on, moreover, till Fort Fisher fell and hostile operations ceased. The result was that at the close of the war the United States had upon its hands a large number of ships-of-war for which it had no use. The Secretary of the Navy at once began to reduce the number, and secretaries succeeding him followed the same policy. Old vessels which had outlived their usefulness as cruisers were one by one taken out of commission and were not replaced. Thus the navy moved steadily on a downward plane. Through the seventies and into the eighties this retrogression continued. The lowest ebb was reached in 1882, when the entire naval force numbered only thirty-one vessels in commission, all but four of which were built entirely of wood. They were old-fashioned

ships, which had been efficient in a past day, but were totally unfit to cope with the modern war-ships of foreign naval powers. Both their guns and engines were inferior. Their sole usefulness, in short, lay in displaying the national flag upon the seas and in the harbors of the commercial world in times of peace.

This condition of the navy was referred to by Secretary Chandler, in his report of 1882, as follows:

"It is not the policy of the United States to maintain a large navy, but its reputation, honor, and prosperity require that such naval vessels as it possesses shall be the best which human ingenuity can devise and modern artificers construct. Our present vessels are not such and cannot be made such. They should be gradually replaced by iron or steel cruisers, and allowed to go out of commission."

It may be of interest to add that in 1882 there was only one high-power cannon in the navy, while there were nearly nineteen hundred naval officers, making the proportion of fifty-nine officers for each ship, and one for every five seamen.

As the result of Secretary Chandler's recommendations in his report of 1882, three steel war-ships and an armed despatch-steamer were authorized by the next Congress. The building of these vessels, named the "Chicago," the "Boston," the "Atlanta," and the "Dolphin," may be regarded as the first movement toward the making of the new navy of the United States.

While progress in naval construction has been so rapid that these ships are a long distance behind the war-vessels of to-day in power, they were then considered to be equal to any afloat in their respective classes. All are unarmored. The "Chicago," of forty-five hundred tons displacement and a speed of fourteen knots an hour, was an example of the largest and best unarmored fighting and cruising vessel then built, and, according to Secretary Chandler, had no superior in speed, endurance, and armament. In the "Boston" and "Atlanta," each of three thousand tons displacement and a speed of thirteen knots an hour, speed and endurance were supposed to have been given their greatest development, and their fighting power was increased by placing the battery on a central superstructure on the spar-deck and adopting a brig rig, so that the extremities would be clear for a fore and aft fire. The "Dolphin," of fifteen hundred tons displacement and a speed

of fifteen knots, was designed as an auxiliary in naval operations, and it was expected that she would furnish a model for high-speed commerce-destroyers to be subsequently built. These vessels were constructed at an aggregate cost of over $2,400,000, in the ship-yard of John Roach, of Chester, Pa. The "Dolphin" was launched in 1884.

The Congress which authorized the building of the cruisers also directed that the double-turreted monitors, "Puritan," "Amphitrite," "Terror," and "Monadnock," whose keels had been laid several years before, be completed. In accordance with this order they were launched in 1883.

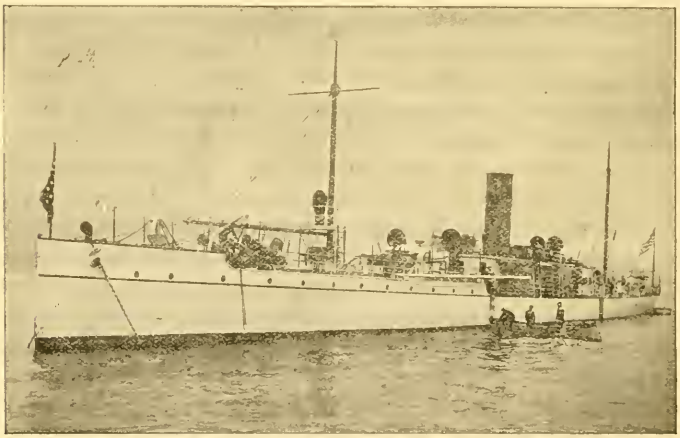
In order that the work of the reconstruction of the navy should be carried on as rapidly as possible, the secretary recommended, in 1883 and 1884, that seven unarmored cruisers, in addition to the four then in the process of construction, be built. Congress adopted his suggestion to the extent of authorizing, in 1884, the construction of two unarmored cruisers, two gunboats, and two armored cruisers.

The vessels with which the reconstruction of the navy began—namely the "Chicago," the "Boston," the "Atlanta," and the "Dolphin"—were completed about this time, and were in some measure disappointments. It was found that the "Dolphin" was better adapted for pleasure trips than for war service, because of the lack of protection against hostile fire. The engines had been so placed as to be exposed above water-line, which was condemned as a serious mistake in a war-vessel without armor-protection. It was realized, too, that the essential characteristic in an unarmored cruiser is great speed. The function she is expected to perform is to destroy commerce; and if she is slower than the merchant-vessels it is useless for her to go to sea; and if she is slower than the ironclads, and consequently cannot escape from them, she could not long continue her service. The chief objection to the vessels was the lack of a speed equal to that of merchantmen and the cruisers of other countries. The type of protected cruiser with a maximum speed, in some cases as high as twenty knots, developed at this time as a result of the earlier experiments. The torpedo, too, was receiving constant attention, and money was freely spent for its improvement. It was found that vessels at anchor or under slow headway could be protected from torpedoes by being surrounded by a large net. This defence was generally adopted for armored vessels.

A stride forward in naval construction in the United States marked the year 1887. Before that time a serious obstacle in the way of building up the navy was the lack in the country of manufactories necessary to the construction and armament of a modern war-vessel, namely, that of steel forgings for the heavier guns, of armor for ironclad vessels, and of secondary batteries, which are an essential portion of the armament. It was important that the country should not be dependent upon foreigners for these necessary implements of warfare, because they are contraband in time of war, and consequently could not then be obtained abroad. Secretary of the Navy Whitney, who succeeded Secretary Chandler, stipulated, in his advertisements for bids for the contracts of making the armor for the ships under construction, that this armor should be of domestic manufacture. Correspondence was also opened with the leading steel manufacturers of the country, offering them inducements to take the matter up. Interest was awakened, and it was found upon investigation that armor could be made in the United States as advantageously as abroad. A contract was drawn up with the Bethlehem Iron Company, under which a plant for the production of armor and gun steel was erected at Bethlehem, Pa., which was designed to be second to none in the world. In the matter of the second batteries, the policy of insisting upon home manufacture was also pursued, with the desired result.

Congress had authorized, in 1885, the construction of two additional cruisers and two gunboats. In 1886 there was further authorization of two armor-clad vessels, each of about six thousand tons, and each to cost, exclusive of armament, not more than $2,500,000. In 1887 the sum of $2,000,000 was appropriated for harbor and coast defence vessels. As a result of this reawakening on the part of Congress to the necessity of a respectable navy, and the manifestations of enlightenment in the form of substantial appropriations, Secretary Whitney was able to state in his report of 1888 that upon the completion of the ships under construction, the United States would rank second among the nations in the possession of unarmored cruisers or commerce-destroyers possessing the highest characteristics—namely, size of three thousand tons and upward and a speed of nineteen knots, and more. The vessels, inclusive of the monitors, completed and uncompleted, then composing the navy, were as follows: The "Dolphin," "Boston,"

"Atlanta," "Chicago," whose keels were laid in 1883; the "Charleston," "Baltimore," "Newark," "Philadelphia," "San Francisco," protected cruisers, whose keels were laid in 1887 and 1888; and the gunboats "Yorktown," "Petrel," "Concord," "Bennington," whose keels were laid in 1887 and 1888. In addition to these, there were under construction the dynamite cruiser "Vesuvius," with a guaranteed speed of twenty knots an hour, and a first-class torpedo-boat with a speed of twenty-three knots an hour.



DYNAMITE CRUISER "VESUVIUS."

Besides these, five protected cruisers had been authorized, but were not yet in process of construction.

The "Baltimore," "Charlestown," "Yorktown," and "Petrel" were given their trial trips in 1889, and were accepted by the Navy Department The trip of the "Baltimore," in particular, was a brilliant success. The horse-power proved to be in excess of the contract requirement, and her highest speed for one hour was 20.39 knots--this result being then unparalleled by any war-ship in the world of the "Baltimore's" displacement.

When Benjamin F. Tracy became Secretary of the Navy, in 1889, he called attention to the fact that, while the United States had secured a num-

ber of excellent vessels of the cruiser type, it did not as yet possess an efficient navy. He pointed out that the country had two widely separated ocean frontiers to protect, and that there was only one way to protect them, namely, by two separate fleets of armored battle-ships. He said further that in addition to the battle-ships, the condition of the country required at least twenty vessels for coast and harbor defence, and, moreover, that the employment of these ships as floating fortresses demanded that they be equipped with the most powerful batteries and the heaviest of armor. It may be said parenthetically that eight vessels of this type, five of which were reconstructed monitors, were under construction or had been authorized at that time. Secretary Tracy recommended the authorization by the following Congress of eight armored battle-ships. He also said that the United States could not afford to neglect torpedo-boats, with which the foreign naval powers were well supplied, and he recommended that appropriations be made for the construction of at least five of these boats of the first and second class. The year before, the keel of the first of the battle-ships, the "Texas," had been laid in the navy-yard at Norfolk, Va., and in 1889 work was begun at the Brooklyn navy yard upon another vessel of the same class, the "Maine." These vessels are respectively of 6,314 and 6,648 tons displacement. The construction of a third battle-ship, which had been provided for, had not yet been begun.

Secretary Tracy's recommendations reveal clearly the naval condition in 1889. Previous to that year the additions to the navy had consisted chiefly of cruisers of from three to four thousand tons, and of gunboats under two thousand tons; but, acting upon the secretary's report, Congress, on June 10, 1890, authorized, in addition to another armored cruiser, three seagoing coast-line battle-ships. These were an entirely new class of vessels in the United States navy, and their authorization marks another distinct step in its reconstruction.

An appropriation was made in 1891 for an additional armored cruiser, designed to be a sister ship to the one provided for in 1890. It was the purpose to make these vessels more powerful than any of their type in the navy. Their tonnage was fixed at 7,500, and their maximum speed at twenty-two knots. They were to be given coal capacity that would enable them to cruise for great distances without recoaling. This, it will be seen,

is an important advantage to a navy so destitute of coaling-stations abroad as that of the United States.

The vessels under construction in 1891 were the monitors "Puritan," "Amphitrite," "Monadnock," and "Terror," which had been begun in 1874, but had been neglected in subsequent years; the "Maine," the "Texas," the coast-defence vessel "Monterey," which was launched in 1891; the "New York," "Cincinnati," "Raleigh," "Detroit," and a practice-ship, which had been authorized by the act of 1887; the harbor-defence ram "Katahdin;" and gunboats "5" and "6," authorized in 1889; the three battle-ships, "Indiana," "Massachusetts," and "Oregon," and the protected cruiser "No. 12," authorized by the act of 1890; and protected cruiser "No. 13," provided for in 1891.

Three vessels, the "Newark," the "Concord," and the "Bennington," were given their trial trips in 1890. The behavior of the "Newark" proved her to be a valuable addition to the list of cruisers. The "Concord" and the "Bennington," vessels of the gunboat class, similar to the "Yorktown," also gave evidences of power and usefulness. They carry a comparatively heavy battery, while their light draught enables them to run into shallow rivers and bays, and thus perform services for which larger vessels are incapacitated.

The subject of the organization of a naval militia or reserve had been discussed for some time before Secretary Tracy assumed his office. He forcibly urged the necessity of such an organization in his first and in following annual reports, until, in 1891, Congress appropriated $25,000 for arms for the militia. This was a decided impetus toward its development, and at the close of the year it existed in six States, an effective, well-drilled, and organized force of eleven hundred men.

The year 1892 saw considerable progress in the development of the navy. Two important vessels, the "Iowa," a first-class, seagoing battle-ship of 11,296 tons displacement, and the "Brooklyn," an armored cruiser of 9,150 tons displacement, were provided for by Congress. The cruisers "Texas," "Columbia," "Olympia," "Raleigh," and "Cincinnati," and the gunboats "Machias" and "Castine" were launched.

Secretary Tracy's administration of the affairs of the navy, which closed in 1892, was one of marked progress and development; and this develop-

ment was not confined to ships alone. Experiments extending over a period of three years had resulted in the adopting of an armor of new composition, namely, nickel-steel, which had been found to be far superior to any before known. The manufacture of torpedoes had been domesticated. Since 1889 the heavy, rapid-firing guns had been developed and proved successful. The manufacture of armor-piercing shells, of which two firms in Europe had had the monopoly, was begun in this period under the care and encouragement of the Navy Department; and the shells turned out soon surpassed the foreign product. Through investigation and experiment conducted by its own agencies, the Navy Department succeeded in developing a smokeless powder, which gave better results than that made abroad. Careful and protracted experiments with high explosives were also carried on, with the result of developing an explosive that can be safely used in shells fired from high-power guns.

In 1893, the first year of the administration of Secretary Herbert, the following vessels were launched: the armored battle-ships "Indiana" and "Massachusetts;" the protected cruiser "Minneapolis;" the unarmored and very rapid cruiser "Marblehead;" and the armed coast-defence ram "Katahdin." During the same year Congress authorized the construction of three new vessels, to be of the class known as light-draft protected gunboats. These are of about twelve hundred tons displacement, and are designed for river service in China and elsewhere. Several vessels, namely, the "Monterey," "Bancroft," "Detroit," "New York," armored cruiser of 8,480 tons displacement, and the gunboat "Machias," were given their trial trips in 1893. The results were in each case satisfactory, and the vessels were added to the effective fleet of the navy.

Before 1893 the United States had been behind the other important nations in the matter of small-arms equipment. The navy was still using the old-fashioned, large-calibre rifle, employing a charge of black powder, and effectively carrying only twelve hundred yards. Under Secretary Herbert's direction, a board of naval officers investigated the improved small arms in use in foreign navies, and made recommendations which resulted in the adoption of a small-calibre magazine rifle, in which is used smokeless powder, and which has an effective range of a mile and a half. A further advantage of the new rifle is that it employs cartridges of such a weight that no less than

two hundred rounds can be carried by one man. The cartridges used in the old rifle were so heavy that one man could not carry more than fifty rounds.

Secretary Herbert recommended in his report of 1893 that Congress authorize the construction of at least one new battle-ship and six torpedo-boats. He said that for the defence of ports the latter are more effective according to cost than any class of vessels. The knowledge of their existence alone will make an enemy chary about approaching within bombarding distance. The value of this boat is recognized by all naval powers, and they are being built abroad in great numbers. The next naval appropriation contained a provision authorizing the construction of three additional torpedo-boats of the general type of the "Ericsson," which was then ready for trial. The design for the new boat called for a speed of not less than twenty-four and one-half knots an hour. The battle-ships "Indiana," "Texas," and "Oregon" underwent preliminary trial trips in 1894, and were accepted by the government in 1895. It is of interest to note that until these vessels were put in commission, the navy was still in the condition that existed when President Cleveland, in his first message to Congress in 1885, made the following statement: "We have not a single vessel that could keep the seas against a first-class vessel of any important power." It is true that vessels of size and power enough to hold their own against the battle-ships of other nations had been under construction for several years, but the United States was still without an available man-of-war of the first class until the "Indiana" and the "Oregon" joined the fleet.

Considerable progress in naval affairs marked the year 1895. One of the important events was the adding to the commissioned fleet of the coast-defence monitor "Amphitrite," whose keel was laid in 1874. The work of remodelling her was begun in 1889, under the appropriation made by Congress in 1887. The "Amphitrite" is in some respects an old-fashioned type of vessel, but is nevertheless capable of important service. Her displacement is 3,990 tons. Her armor and armament are heavy, although not so powerful as that of the battle-ships. Her main advantage, as with all of the monitors, is that she presents a comparatively small target for the enemy's fire.

Adopting the spirit of Secretary Herbert's recommendations in his report of 1894, Congress, in 1895, authorized the construction of two coast-

line battle-ships of most formidable equipment and power, their cost not to exceed $4,000,000 each. Further provision was made for the building of twelve torpedo-boats. An interesting feature of the bill was the stipulation that one of the battle-ships shall bear the historic name "Kearsarge," after the famous old man-of-war that was wrecked in 1894 on Roncador Reef. According to the plans of the new ships, they resemble in a general way the "Indiana," although they are longer and broader and have a greater displacement, and their batteries are more powerful. A new feature in the arrangement of the guns was decided upon. The vessels will carry two turrets of two stories each. Many objections to this plan were advanced, but it was said that all are outweighed by the opportunity which the turrets give of concentrating an enormous quantity of shot on a given point. An estimate has been made that the "Kearsarge" will carry enough ammunition to kill or disable a million persons, and that she will be able to discharge it all within a period of five hours. Accommodations will be provided for five hundred and twenty officers and men. The "Kearsarge" and her sister ship, which will be called the "Kentucky," will carry heavier armor and guns and a greater quantity of the latter than any foreign battle-ship in existence or in course of construction.

The ram "Katahdin" was rejected by the government in 1895, because, upon her official trials, she did not fulfil the speed requirements. She made 16.011 knots, while the contract called for 17 knots. Congress was asked to purchase the vessel, and finally did so.

The armored cruiser "Brooklyn," designed to be one of the fastest and most powerful vessels of her class afloat, was launched from Cramp's shipyard in Philadelphia in 1895. She is the sister ship to the "New York," which was put in commission in 1893. A matter of significance, as showing the rapid progress in the art of naval construction within a few years, was the taking out of commission in 1895 of the "Chicago," to be refitted with engines and boilers that will give her powers approaching those of the newer vessels. Two years will be required for this work, and when she is complete she will travel three knots an hour faster than heretofore, and in many respects will be substantially a new ship.

The official trial trip of the battle-ship "Massachusetts," which occurred in 1896, was a source of gratification to the Navy Department and to all

others who are anxious to see the United States take respectable rank among the naval powers. The primary business of a battle-ship is to fight; hence her guns and not her speed are of the first importance. Naval experts have agreed that the "Massachusetts" and her sister ships, the "Indiana" and the "Oregon," have larger and more effective batteries than any man-of-war afloat or in progress of construction. The "Massachusetts" has now proved, by steaming at the rate of 16.15 knots for four hours, with a maximum speed of 17.03 knots, that she is superior to all other battle-ships in speed as well as in armament. Her performance is unparalleled in naval history, and makes her the foremost war-vessel of the world. The "Indiana" is a trifle slower. She steamed 15.61 knots for four hours, but under the disadvantage of a bottom that had never been cleaned. She would probably go half a knot faster with a clean bottom. As a representative specimen of the battle-ships which belong to the navy, a few details of the "Massachusetts'" armament may be of interest. She has thirty guns in all. The chief of these are four of thirteen-inch calibre, which are the largest in use in modern navies; a pair of them can be fired every three minutes. The eight-inch guns are next in size. There are four of them, and they can be fired every minute. In addition to these, there are two six-inch rifles, twenty six-pounders, and four one-pounders. The six-inch guns can be fired twice a minute, and the six-pounders twenty times in the same period. In a fight lasting thirty minutes, these guns would throw forty-one and a half tons of metal, of which forty-four thousand pounds would be the share of the thirteen-inch guns, thirty thousand pounds the share of the eight-inch, six thousand pounds of the six-inch, and thirty-six hundred pounds of the others. The total weight of the "Massachusetts'" broadside is 5,724 pounds, and of her head or astern fire 3,434 pounds.

Another of the monitors, the "Monadnock," was added to the navy in 1896. She was launched in 1883, and was then practically left alone until the acts of 1885, 1886, and 1887 provided for her completion. She is now a formidable vessel, with heavy guns which can be made to bear on a point a small boat's length from the ship's side, or can bombard at a distance of six miles.

While the successive Secretaries of the Navy, during the last fourteen years, have been chiefly active in increasing the number of ships-of-war,

they have not altogether neglected defences on the coast. Some of the larger sea-coast cities have succeeded in obtaining a part of the heavy gun and mortar batteries that would be necessary in repelling attacks without the aid of battle-ships. The cities of New York and San Francisco have now mounted and ready for action powerful pneumatic dynamite gun batteries, the most destructive engines of war in existence. Each of these guns is capable of hurling a projectile carrying five hundred pounds of the most powerful explosive known to man, and is able to destroy the strongest iron-clad. In the naval battle of Sinope in the Crimean War, a shell designed to explode on striking the object was used for the first time. When the high explosives, such as dynamite and gun-cotton, appeared, the idea suggested itself that they might be used in the shells with vastly greater effect than gunpowder, which had been employed. The objection, however, was that these explosives are so sensitive that there was great danger of their exploding at the outset of the journey from the sudden shock of being hurled from the ordinary high-power guns and mortars. Captain Zalinski, of the United States Artillery, suggested a method of gun construction by which the shells could be projected by a steady pressure of compressed air instead of by the sudden force of powder gases. This system has been steadily improved until the pneumatic dynamite gun now works perfectly and is a marvel of destructiveness. The United States possesses six and Great Britain one of the seven dynamite guns that have thus far been manufactured for coast defence.

The "Iowa," a battle-ship of the first class, whose keel was laid in 1893, was launched in March, 1895. She is the largest vessel of the navy now afloat, her displacement being 11,410 tons, which is over a thousand tons greater than that of the "Massachusetts," "Indiana," or "Oregon."

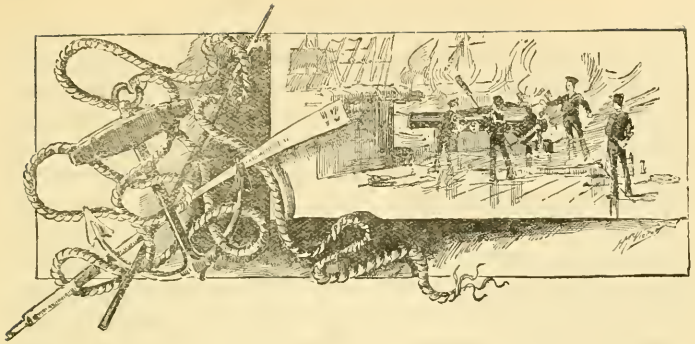
It will be seen that progress toward the building of the new navy of the United States has been steady since the first move was made in 1882. As a result of this development, the navy now consists, counting the vessels built and authorized by Congress, prior to 1896, the naval appropriations bill for that year still pending at this writing, of about seventy modern ships-of-war. These include eight battle-ships, six coast-defence steelclads, two armored cruisers, one armored ram, thirteen protected cruisers, eighteen gunboats and unprotected cruisers, and about two dozen torpedo-boats. This

fleet gives the United States sixth place in the list of naval powers, being outranked in number of vessels by England, France, Russia, Germany, or Italy, in the order named. A true idea of the comparative fighting strength of the United States navy is not conveyed, however, by its rank in the numerical strength of the fleet. The *personnel* of the navy and the power of the individual ships must be considered. It is generally conceded that the United States has the finest fighting men and vessels in the world. These advantages would, in all probability, enable us to whip Germany or Italy in a series of naval contests; therefore, it is thought by naval critics that we really hold fourth position among the naval powers. England is still a long way ahead of us, the English navy now numbering nearly five hundred vessels, of which one hundred and twenty are armored cruisers. But, comparing the navies ship to ship, the United States fleet, so far as it goes, is superior even to that of Great Britain. The battle-ships, while somewhat smaller, are more effective fighters. The English navy has no armored cruisers as fast or as powerful as the "New York" and "Brooklyn;" and the commerce-destroyers, "Columbia" and "Minneapolis," are the fastest vessels, either of war or peace, that have gone to sea.

That this new navy of ours will ever have to meet so stern an ordeal as that through which the sailors of '61 went is wholly improbable. In multiplying the number and the effectiveness of fighting machines the nations of the world have seemingly lessened the likelihood of war. International disputes which once would have put the territory of all Europe ablaze are now settled by the peaceful devices of diplomacy. But behind the diplomat must be the gun, and it will be a sorry day for the United States when, if ever, the sense of security bred of an avowed national policy of non-intervention in foreign affairs shall lead this people to neglect the naval arm of the republic.

# PART V.

# THE NAVAL WAR WITH SPAIN.



## CHAPTER I.

THE STATE OF CUBA.—PERTINACITY OF THE REVOLUTIONISTS.—SPAIN'S SACRIFICES AND FAILURE.—SPANISH BARBARITIES.—THE POLICY OF RECONCENTRATION.—AMERICAN SYMPATHY AROUSED.—THE STRUGGLE IN CONGRESS.—THE ASSASSINATION OF THE "MAINE."—REPORT OF THE COMMISSION.—THE ONWARD MARCH TO BATTLE.

A SHORT time after the inauguration of William McKinley as President of the United States in March, 1897, it became apparent that the disordered condition of Cuba under Spanish rule was destined inevitably to become an issue which the United States must help to settle. For two years a great part of the island had been in open and determined revolt against Spanish rule. Though the forces of the King had been able to hold the seaports, thus cutting off the insurgents from regular communication with the outer world and making impotent their efforts to secure recognition from foreign powers, the patriots under Maceo and Gomez held control of the interior, established a government of their own, enforced order, and levied taxes. Enormous sacrifices were made by the Spanish people to re-establish sovereignty in the island. More than 300,000 troops were sent thither to be cruelly cut down by plague and pestilence. A nation, long on the verge of bankruptcy, incurred uncomplainingly prodigious additional indebtedness to save for its boy king—Alphonso XIII. was at this time but twelve years

old—its most precious possession in the west, the Pearl of the Antilles. Queen Isabella of Spain pawned her jewels that Columbus might have the means to press his voyage of discovery into unknown seas, but in the closing years of this century the people of Spain pawned their national assets, put even themselves and their posterity in pawn to hold for Spain the last relics of the empire which Columbus won for her.

Though we were forced to draw the sword upon Spain in the cause of humanity and human liberty, the man of reason, and of a sense of justice, will not withhold from the people of that sorely chastened nation admiration for their loyalty and the sacrifices they made in their national cause.

But the Spanish people were cruelly betrayed by their own rulers. The generals whom they sent to Cuba gave less thought to the suppression of the insurrection than to filling their own pockets. Out of the millions and millions of pesetas set aside by an already impoverished people for the needs of war, a great part was stolen by generals and by army contractors. The young conscripts, sent from Spain to a land where the air is pestilential to the unacclimated, were clothed and shod in shoddy; their food invited disease, and when they fell ill it was found that the greed of the generals had consumed the funds that should have provided sufficient hospital service. Comparatively few fell before the bullets or machetes of the insurgents—for, as we shall see, the revolutionists adopted the tactics of Fabius—but by thousands they succumbed to fevers of every kind. Death without glory was the hapless lot of the Spanish conscript.

The Patriot generals, Maximo Gomez and Antonio Maceo, met this situation with consummate skill. The military problem which confronted them was one which chiefly demanded self-restraint. They were lamentably destitute of arms and munitions of war. Cartridges were a dearly prized acquisition, and it is worth noting, as an indication of the venality which corrupted the Spanish army, that a considerable share of the insurgent ammunition was obtained by direct traffic with the Spanish soldiers. But in the main the Patriots were armed with heterogeneous firearms and the machete—a heavy, sword-like knife, used, in peace, for cutting cane. The latter at close quarters was a formidable weapon, and the insurgents became singularly proficient in its use; developing a style of machete play almost as exact and scientific as the school of the rapier in ancient France.

This disparity in weapons, however, made it imperative that the insur-

gents should avoid pitched battles with the invaders, who were armed with Mauser rifles, that do deadly work at two miles' distance. Accordingly, Gomez and Maceo confined themselves to harrying the Spanish army of occupation on every side and destroying all vestiges of Spanish authority outside the large towns. Warfare of this sort inevitably develops into the most cruel, the most barbarous of conflicts. So it was in this case. That Cuba might be made desolate, unable to pay anything toward the price of its own subjection, the insurgents relentlessly destroyed standing crops, burned great fields of standing sugar cane, destroyed mills, dynamited railroads, tore up roads, and demolished aqueducts. That the peaceful inhabitants—the pacificos—might not give aid or comfort to the revolutionists, General Weyler caused them to be driven from their farms and herded in the towns still under Spanish rule. There they stayed, in squalid huts or under thatched sheds, AND STARVED. Systematically, with devilish ingenuity, Spain planned to crush Cuba, not by fighting the revolutionists, but by starving women and children, old men and peaceful farm hands. It is estimated, and conservatively, that more than 500,000 people had been starved to death before the United States interfered.

Indeed, it was upon the hapless pacificos that the horrors of war chiefly descended. They were ruined, but that was the least. Their property, the honor of their women, and their lives were held to be the legitimate spoil of any Spanish soldier, and the tacit legalization of loot, rapine, and murder was taken full advantage of. More inhuman even than the regular soldiery were the guerrillas, licensed free companions, who roamed the island ever in search of spoil. The deeds of these wretches beggar description, and so foul was the repute of their corps that prisoners from their number taken by the Cubans were instantly put to death. It is just to say here that the testimony of Americans who served with Gomez and Maceo proves that those leaders enforced humane and orderly conduct upon their followers. The death penalty was more than once imposed upon useful and brave soldiers, who had been guilty of outrage. Nothing could more vividly indicate the moral difference between the Cuban and the Spaniard than the contrast between their methods of prosecuting the war. Though outlawed, the Revolutionists observed with scrupulous exactness the rules of civilized warfare, while the Spaniards murdered helpless prisoners, even killing the wounded in their beds, had recourse to torture and to nameless

mutilation, in order to wreak their hatred, and let loose a swarm of bandits and ruffians to prey upon the defenseless people of the island.

Out of warfare such as this, waged on an island only a few hours' sail from our coast, and in which were heavy American interests, it was inevitable that invasion of American rights should proceed, and the wrath of the American people be awakened. Our citizens owned large plantations in Cuba, which were destroyed either by the Spaniards or the insurgents. Many Americans living in the island or visiting there, were arrested by the Spanish authorities, and one, at least, Dr. Ruiz, was murdered in Morro Castle, while another, a newspaper correspondent, was cut to pieces by guerrillas. For Spanish outrages upon the lives or property of American citizens, claims aggregating $60,000,000 were on file with the United States Department of State before the declaration of war. The general sympathy of the American people with the insurgents, as well as the hope of profit, led to repeated efforts by our citizens to smuggle arms and munitions of war to the Cubans, and in time it became necessary to employ a great part of the United States navy in police duty on the high seas for the purpose of stopping the filibusters. This service in behalf of Spain was exceedingly repugnant to the American mind, and contributed greatly to the growing feeling of irritation toward Spain.

History in coming ages, however, will relate, to the unending honor and glory of the American people, that humanitarian considerations, rather than regard for imperiled interests, brought the United States into a war which most emphatically their people did not desire. The great New York newspapers, day by day, printed circumstantial accounts of the frightful sufferings in Cuba. One journal secured a great number of photographs of scenes amid the starving reconcentrados, which, greatly enlarged, were publicly exhibited in all parts of the Union. These pictures, showing the frightful distortions of the human body as the result of long starvation, showing little children, mere skeletons, looking mutely down on the dead bodies of their parents, brought home to the mind of the people the state of life in a neighboring land as no writing, however brilliant, could. A cry went up from every part of the United States that a Christian duty was imposed upon our nation to interfere for the alleviation of such horrible suffering. Charity came to the rescue with free contributions of provisions, and Congress made a heavy appropriation of money for the relief of the

Cubans. But everywhere the opinion grew that philanthropy alone could not right this great wrong, but that the strong hand of the United States must reach forth to pluck out the Spaniard from the land he ravaged. And when a number of Senators and Representatives in Congress made journeys to Cuba, and returning, described in formal addresses at the Capitol the scenes of starvation and misery, this opinion hardened into positive conviction.

Then, almost as if planned by some all-knowing power, came a great and inexplicable disaster, which made American intervention inevitable and immediate.

During the latter years of the Cleveland administration the representatives of American interests in Cuba urged that a United States ship-of-war should be permanently stationed in Havana harbor. The request was reasonable, the act in thorough accord with the custom of nations. But, fearing to offend Spain, President Cleveland avoided taking the step and President McKinley for months imitated him. In time this act, which in itself could have had no hostile significance, came to be regarded as an expression of hostility to Spain, and all the resources of Spanish diplomacy were exerted to prevent any American warship from entering Havana harbor. Ultimately, however, the pressure of public opinion compelled the Executive to provide for representation of American authority in the disordered island, and the battleship "Maine"—a sister ship to the "Iowa," a picture of which appears elsewhere in this volume—was sent to Havana.

The night of February 15 the "Maine" lay quietly at her anchorage in the Havana harbor. Her great white hull, with lights shining brilliantly from the ports aft where the officers' quarters were, gleamed in the starlight. On the berth deck the men swung sleeping in their hammocks. The watch on deck breathed gratefully the cool evening air after the long tropic day. Captain Sigsbee was at work in his cabin, and the officers in the wardroom were chatting over their games or dozing over their books. The lights of the town and of the ancient fortress of Morro shone brightly through the purpling light. Not far away the Spanish man-of-war "Alfonso XIII." lay at her moorings, and an American merchantman, brightly lighted, was near. The scene was peaceful, quiet, beautiful. True, in the minds of many officers and men on the American warship there was a lurking and indefinable sense of danger. Their coming had been taken by the Span-

iards in Havana as a hostile act. Though all the perfunctory requirements of international courtesy had been complied with, salutes interchanged, visits of ceremony paid and returned, there was yet in the Spanish greeting an ill-concealed tone of anger. In the cafés Spanish officers cursed the Yankees and boasted of their purpose to destroy them. On the streets American blue-jackets, on shore leave, were jostled, jeered, and insulted. Yet the ill-temper of the Spaniards, though apparent, was so ill defined that no apprehension of a positive attack was felt. As is the practice on men-of-war, however, the utmost vigilance was maintained. Only the employment of a boat patrol and the use of torpedo nettings were lacking to give the "Maine" the aspect of a ship in an enemy's harbor.

Then came the disaster that shocked the world. A disaster in which it is impossible not to suspect the element of treachery. A disaster which if purely accidental, occurring to a hated ship in a port surrounded by men who were enemies at heart, was the most extraordinary coincidence in history. The story is brief. Not until this war is ended and the authority of the United States is employed to clear up the mystery, can the real narrative of the destruction of the "Maine" be told.

This much we know: At about half-past nine those on the "Maine" who lived to tell the tale heard a sudden dull explosion, with a slight shock, then a prolonged, deep, furious roar, which shook the ship to its very vitals. The people on the other ships in the harbor saw the whole forward portion of the "Maine" suddenly become a flaming volcano belching forth fire, men, huge pieces of steel, and bursting shells. Portions of the ship's hull rained down on decks a thousand yards away. When the first fierce shock of the explosion was past, it was seen that the "Maine" was on fire and was rapidly sinking.

How wonderful is the power of discipline upon the human mind! On the great battle-ship, with hundreds of its men blown to pieces or penned down by steel débris to be drowned in the rapidly rising waters, there was no panic. Captain Sigsbee, rushing from his cabin door, is met by the sergeant of marines who serves him as orderly. Not a detail of naval etiquette is lacking. Sergeant William Anthony salutes:

"I have to report, sir, that the ship is blown up and is sinking," he says, as he would report a pilot boat in the offing.

The captain reaches the deck to find his officers already at work, the

men who have not been injured all at their stations. Boats are lowered and ply about the harbor to rescue survivors. Though the flames rage fiercely, and the part of the ship which they have not yet reached is full of high explosives, there is no panic. At the first alarm every man has done what years of drill and teaching have taught him to do. The after-magazines have been flooded, the boats' crews called away. Even preparations for a fight had been attempted. Lieutenant Jenkins, hearing the first explosion, sprang so quickly for his station at a forward gun that he was caught in the second explosion and slain. Though a bolt from heaven or a shock from hell had struck the "Maine," it brought death only—not fear nor panic.

The work of rescuing survivors and caring for the wounded was pushed apace, for the ship sunk rapidly, until only her after-superstructure was above the water. Boats from the Spanish man-of-war joined in the work of mercy and her officers, as though conscious that the suspicion of treachery was first in every man's mind, exerted themselves in every way to show solicitude for the wounded and sorrow for the disaster. When all was done that could be done, and the roll of the ship's company was called, it was found that 266 brave Americans were lost in Havana harbor—a friendly port. Some lie there yet, penned down beneath the gnarled and scorched steel which formed the gallant "Maine"; others lie in lonely graves on the adjacent shore, where, before this war is ended, the American flag shall be raised above them to be their avenger and their monument.

It will be necessary to outline in only the most terse and condensed form the political and military events which succeeded the destruction of the "Maine" and led up to the declaration of war. The news of the great disaster was received at home with horror, speedily turning to anger. The Government, rightly desiring to proceed calmly and in accordance with regularly ascertained facts, strove to calm the public temper, but with little success. It gave out as Captain Sigsbee's first report of the disaster a cable message, which contained no charge of treachery, advised caution, and urged a suspension of judgment. But presently it became rumored about Washington that this dispatch was, in fact, sent under orders; that the captain's first report formally charged the Spaniards with blowing up the ship. In the newspapers the discussion raged and theories of the dis-

aster were plentiful, but, after long weeks of careful study of the evidence, the Naval Board of Inquiry presented the following report:

When the "Maine" arrived at Havana, she was conducted by the regular Government pilot to buoy No. 4, to which she was moored in from five to six fathoms of water.

The state of discipline on board, and the condition of her magazines, boilers, coal-bunkers, and storage compartments, are passed in review, with the conclusion that excellent order prevailed, and that no indication of any cause for an internal explosion existed in any quarter.

At eight o'clock on the evening of February 15 everything had been reported secure, and all was quiet. At 9.40 o'clock the vessel was suddenly destroyed.

There were two distinct explosions, with a brief interval between them. The first lifted the forward part of the ship very perceptibly; the second, which was more open, prolonged, and of greater volume, is attributed by the Court to the partial explosion of two or more of the forward magazines.

The evidence of the divers establishes that the after-part of the ship was practically intact, and sank in that condition a very few minutes after the explosion. The forward part was completely demolished.

Upon the evidence of a concurrent external cause the finding of the Court is as follows:

At frame 17 the outer shell of the ship, from a point eleven and one-half feet from the middle line of the ship and six feet above the keel when in its natural position, has been forced up so as to be now about four feet above the surface of the water; therefore, about thirty-four feet above where it would be had the ship sunk uninjured.

The outside bottom plating is bent into a reversed V-shape, the after-wing of which, about fifteen feet broad and thirty-two feet in length (from frame 17 to frame 25), is doubled back upon itself against the continuation of the same plating extending forward.

At frame 18 the vertical keel is broken in two and the flat keel bent into an angle similar to the angle formed by the outside bottom plates. This break is now about six feet below the surface of the water and about thirty feet above its normal position.

In the opinion of the Court, this effect could have been produced only by the explosion of a mine situated under the bottom of the ship, at about frame 18, and somewhat on the port side of the ship.

The conclusions of the Court are:

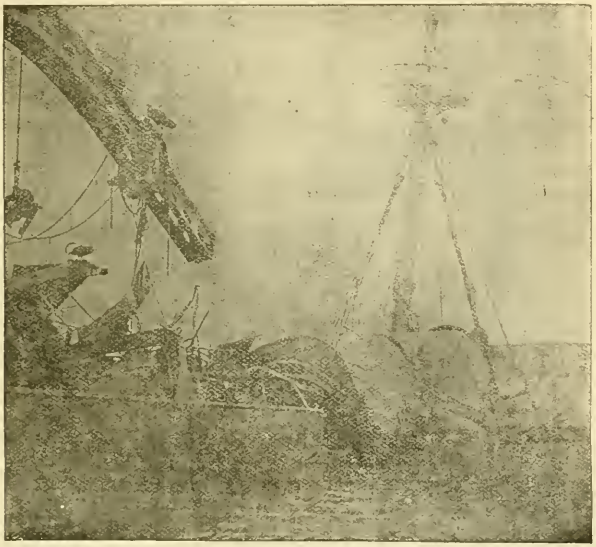
That the loss of the "Maine" was not in any respect due to fault or negligence on the part of any of the officers or members of her crew.

That the ship was destroyed by the explosion of a submarine mine, which caused the partial explosion of two or more of her forward magazines; and,

That no evidence has been obtainable fixing the responsibility for the destruction of the "Maine" upon any person or persons.

To-day, in the midst of war with Spain, we have no more definite, no more authoritative knowledge of the cause of this disaster than this.

Spain, indeed, through her official commission, decided that the explosion was wholly internal, but the American people is not convinced. Battleships are not in the habit of blowing themselves up, and it is the expectation that the establishment of American authority in Cuba will be followed by the unraveling of this murderous plot. Undoubtedly an anecdote told



PARTIAL VIEW OF THE WRECK OF THE "MAINE."

of Captain Robley D. Evans (Fighting Bob) of the navy expresses the popular conviction:

"The admiral in command of the United States fleet at Key West should have sailed for Havana on getting news of the 'Maine's' destruction," said Evans. "He should have reduced the forts, seized the city, discovered the assassins, and hanged them."

"But that would have been defiance of the orders of the Navy Department," responded his auditor, aghast.

"Perhaps so," admitted Evans, "but the man who did it would have been the next President of the United States."

While the "Maine" Court of Inquiry was in session measures looking toward war were rapidly taken. March 9, a bill, which had passed both houses of Congress without a dissenting voice, became a law, appropriating $50,000,000 to be expended for the national defense. Out of this sum the Navy Department bought two Brazilian cruisers building in England, which were rechristened the "New Orleans" and "Albany." A flotilla of yachts, sea-going tugs, and merchantmen was bought and refitted. The great American liners "St. Paul," "City of Paris," "City of New York," and "St. Louis" were chartered and made into auxiliary cruisers. All Europe was ransacked for purchasable warships and torpedo boats, with the result of proving that no nation, however rich, can equip itself with a navy in an emergency. Not one battle-ship was available for purchase, and only four cruisers, of doubtful quality. And while this work of preparation was going hurriedly on the country was drifting into war with what seemed at the time inexplicable slowness, but to the calmer backward glance of history will appear dangerously swift in the face of our great lack of preparation. What might be termed the milestones on the march to battle were these:

*April 5.*—Consul General Fitz Hugh Lee recalled from Havana.

*April 11.*—Message of the President on Cuba, recommending that we have power to intervene forcibly without "recognizing at this time the independence of the present insurgent government."

*April 13.*—The House passed a resolution directing the President to intervene in Cuba at once, and authorizing him to use the land and naval forces of the United States to stop the war.

*April 16.*—The Senate passed a joint resolution, as a substitute for the House resolution, declaring the island to be free, recognizing the republic, demanding relinquishment of authority in Cuba by Spain, and withdrawal of Spanish forces; directing the President to call out the militia in addition to regular land and naval forces, and, finally, disclaiming any intention to annex the island.

*April 19.*—Senate resolution adopted by the House, with the proviso recognizing the republic of Cuba stricken out. Both houses agreed to the report in this form.

REAR-ADMIRAL GEORGE DEWEY

ADMIRAL SAMPSON'S FLEET OFF PUERTO RICO, IN SEARCH OF CERVERA'S VESSELS, MAY 1, 1898

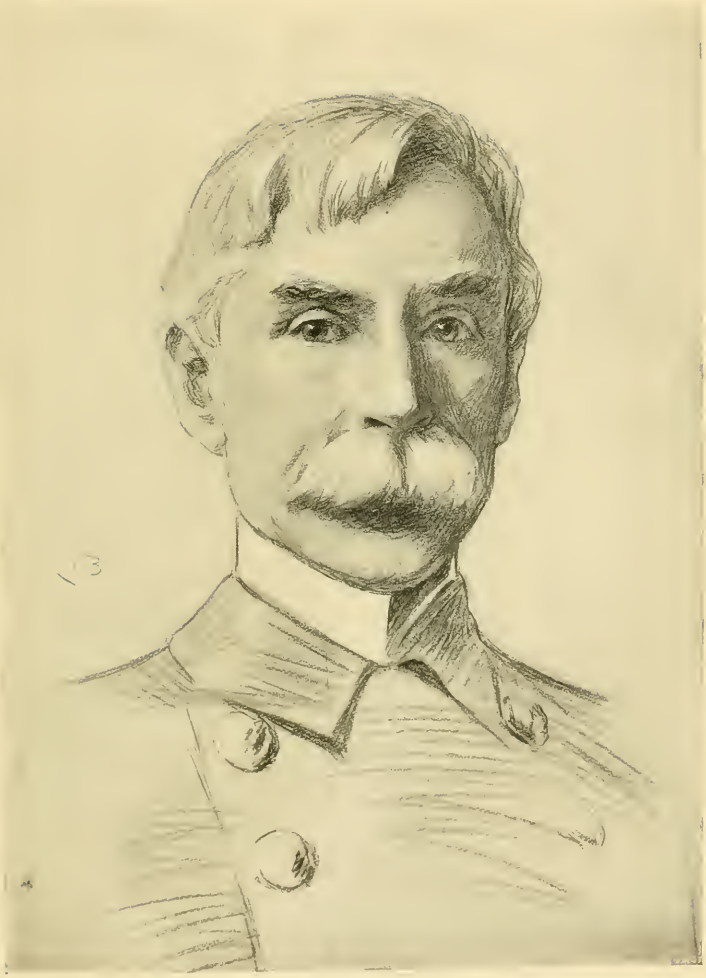
ADMIRAL CERVERA'S FLEET APPROACHING SANTIAGO, MAY, 1898

ADMIRAL WILLIAM THOMAS SAMPSON.

BOMBARDMENT OF SAN JUAN, PUERTO RICO, MAY 13, 1898

HOBSON SINKING THE "MERRIMAC" IN THE ENTRANCE TO SANTIAGO HARBOR, JUNE 3, 1898

COMMODORE WINFIELD SCOTT SCHLEY.



COMMODORE JOHN CRITTENDEN WATSON

FORWARD DECK OF THE DYNAMITE-GUN VESSEL VESUVIUS.

FORWARD THIRTEEN-INCH GUN ON BATTLESHIP INDIANA.

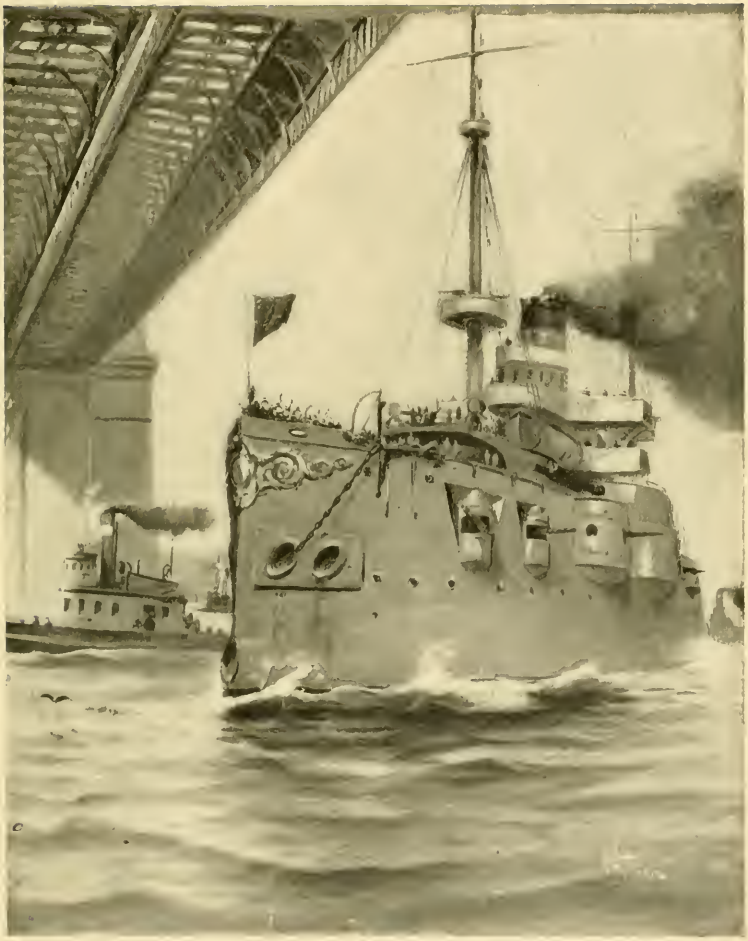
CREW OF THE "INDIANA" WATCHING THE "NEW YORK" CAPTURE A PRIZE

TORPEDO-BOAT "ERICSSON"

HAMMOCK-INSPECTION ON A BATTLESHIP.

ARMORED CRUISER "NEW YORK" ON HER WAY TO PUERTO RICO

MONITORS AT LEAGUE ISLAND NAVY YARD, PHILADELPHIA



NEW YORK'S WELCOME TO THE BATTLESHIP "TEXAS"

SPANISH MERCHANT STEAMER "PANAMA," CAPTURED APRIL 25 BY LIGHTHOUSE TENDER "MANGROVE"

TRAINING SHIPS "PORTSMOUTH" AND "LANCASTER" AT BROOKLYN NAVY YARD

"RACING HOME"—THE BATTLESHIP "OREGON" ON HER WAY FROM SAN FRANCISCO TO KEY WEST

THE LAUNCHING OF THE BATTLESHIP "IOWA"

BATTLESHIP "IOWA" IN DRY-DOCK

THE BATTLESHIP "MAINE" LEAVING NEW YORK FOR HAVANA

DEWEY'S VICTORY—THE NAVAL FIGHT IN MANILA BAY, MAY 1, 1898

IRONCLADS IN ACTION

BOMBARDMENT OF MATANZAS, CUBA, BY THE "NEW YORK," "CINCINNATI," AND "PURITAN," APRIL 27, 1898

ENSIGN WORTH BAGLEY, OF THE TORPEDO-BOAT "WINSLOW," KILLED MAY 11, 1898

BOMBARDMENT OF MORRO CASTLE, SANTIAGO, BY ADMIRAL SAMPSON'S FLEET.

BATTLESHIP "MASSACHUSETTS"

CAPTAIN MAHAN CAPTAIN CROWNINSHIELD SECRETARY LONG ADMIRAL SICARD

THE NAVAL BOARD OF STRATEGY: 1898

*April 20.*—Ultimatum to Spain, cabled at 11 A. M.—a formal demand that Spain at once relinquish its authority and government in the island of Cuba, and withdraw its land and naval forces from Cuba and Cuban waters.

President signed Cuban joint resolutions at 11.24.

Señor Polo y Bernabé, the Spanish Minister, was notified. He at once requested his passports.

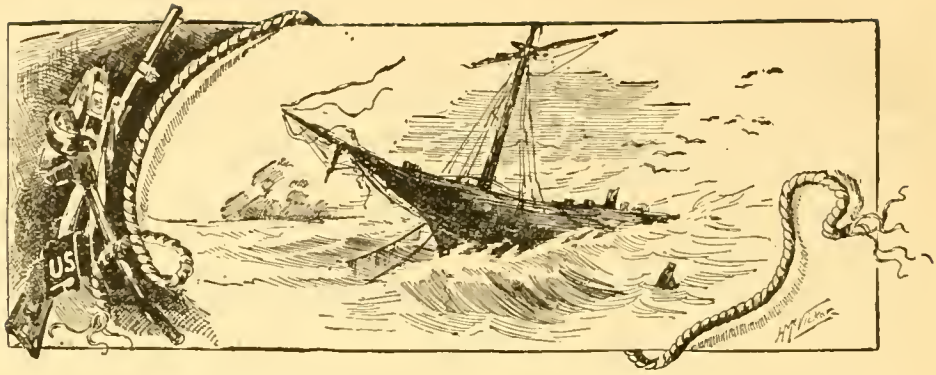
*April 21.*—General Woodford, the American Minister at Madrid, left Spain.

The President directed the Secretary of the Navy to order the vessels of the North Atlantic squadron to proceed without delay to Cuban waters to blockade Havana and other ports of the island.

*April 23.*—President McKinley signed the proclamation calling for 125,000 volunteers.

*April 25.*—Formal declaration of war recommended by the President, and a bill "declaring that war exists between the United States of America and the Kingdom of Spain," passed by both houses.

And so the United States embarked on its first war with any European Power, save England—a war forced upon us by every consideration of humanity—a war which shall be of great advantage or of great harm to our Republic, according as its fruits are wisely or wrongly administered.




## CHAPTER II.

THE OPENING DAYS OF THE WAR.—THE FIRST BLOW STRUCK IN THE PACIFIC.—DEWEY AND HIS FLEET.—THE BATTLE AT MANILA.—AN EYE WITNESS STORY.—DELAY AND DOUBT IN THE EAST.—DULL TIMES FOR THE BLUE JACKETS.—THE DISCOVERY OF CERVERA.—HOBSON'S EXPLOIT.—THE OUTLOOK.

STRANGELY enough the first warlike stroke at Spain was not delivered in or about Cuba, where the quarrel arose, but in the other hemisphere, in the far-away waters of the Asiatic Pacific, where the American flag is almost a stranger and the power and wealth of the great American Republic are unknown. In the Philippine Islands Spain retains one of the colonies with which she once encircled the globe. More than 7,000,000 people—a peace-loving, kindly, intelligent race—are there ruled by the Spaniards, and as the rule was of the characteristic Spanish kind, with all the accompaniments of slaughter, dishonor, and extortion, the natives—as in Cuba—were in a chronic state of rebellion. One uprising, which had assumed very considerable proportions, was reported by the Spaniards as suppressed just before our declaration of war. That event, however, aroused the revolutionists again and, as we shall see, they were of the greatest service to us as allies.

When war was declared an American squadron of six warships lay at Hong Kong. The vessels were the "Olympia," protected cruiser:

"Raleigh," "Baltimore," and "Boston," cruisers; "Concord" and "Petrel," gunboats, and the revenue cutter "McCulloch." Not a very powerful fleet—not a battle-ship nor even an armored cruiser among them—but the ships carried crews of as sturdy Yankee blue-jackets as ever trained a gun, and when the time came for daring an enemy's fire the little "Petrel" was as dashing and defiant as the stoutest of steel-clads could be. In command of the squadron was Admiral George Dewey, a Vermonter, who served with Farragut and had his baptism of fire at the forts below New Orleans. In time of peace the war record of a subaltern is quickly forgotten, and Dewey patiently climbed the ladder of promotion until 1898 found him a commodore and in command of the Asiatic squadron, without anybody's remembering particularly that this officer in far Hong Kong had seen fighting and knew how to bear himself under fire. It is a significant fact that when he had won the first great victory of the war, and the newspapers were searching everywhere for stories illustrative of his character, it was discovered that he had chiefly impressed himself on the Washington mind by his excessive punctiliousness in matters of dress.

Four days after the declaration of war there was a commotion on the ships of Dewey's squadron. The signal to weigh anchor flew from the foremast of the "Olympia," and everybody knew that the admiral had received fighting orders. For some days past the ships had been in their battle rigging. The white paint had been covered by a dull greenish-gray. All woodwork, railings, and unnecessary hamper had been stripped off and sent ashore. The officers' baggage was reduced to the barest necessities. Nothing was left anywhere on board which could be turned into a cloud of flying splinters by a shell, or which cumbered the decks to the inconvenience of the gunners. The warships which, in time of peace, were as bright and sparkling as a well-kept yacht, had put on the sullen, vicious air of war.

Dewey's objective point when he set sail from the harbor of Hong Kong was the Asiatic squadron of Spain, under the command of Admiral Montojo. There was every reason to believe that he would find the enemy under the protecting guns of the forts that guarded the harbor of Manila. In themselves the Spanish ships were no match for the American fleet. Three good ships had Admiral Montojo—the "Reina Cristina," the "Castilla," and the "Don Antonio de Ulloa"; but his others were old-fashioned

and lacking in modern armament. But should they take positions under the guns of the Spanish forts, at the end of a channel plentifully guarded by mines and torpedoes, the disparity in forces would disappear. As it occurred this was precisely what they did, giving Admiral Dewey opportunity to put into practice tactics which it seems he had studied for months in anticipation of exactly such an emergency.

On the night of April 30 the American ships arrived at the entrance of Manila harbor, unseen by the sentries on the forts. It was known that Montojo was inside, and every light was extinguished and every noise hushed on the Yankee ships, for the admiral had planned a midnight entrance to the stronghold. The ships were stripped for action, boats covered with canvas, nettings spread to prevent splinters from flying, partitions removed, and ammunition hoists and bullet shields put up. At midnight the entrance to the harbor began, the ships steaming in single column at about six knots an hour, with the "Olympia" leading. Strangely enough not a single torpedo or mine in the channel was exploded, though the Spaniards discovered the advance of the ships and opened fire from the forts. The first shot in answer was fired by a gunner on the "Boston," without orders. He saw the flash of a gun on a shore battery and instantly fired his piece without altering its elevation. That dismantled a gun in the Spanish works and killed thirty men.

For a few hours after passing the forts the wearied blue-jackets slept at their guns. With the approach of day came the signal from the flagship to prepare for action. In the gray dawn the Spanish fleet could be seen about two miles distant, at such a point that their fire could be re-enforced by the guns of the forts. A most graphic story of the action that followed, as seen from the view-point of "the man behind the gun," whom Captain Mahan eulogizes, is told by Chief Gunner Evans of the "Boston," from whose narrative I quote the following paragraphs:

"We were steaming very slowly, but increasing speed as the dawn increased. In the gray daylight we could make out a line of ships anchored in front of the city. Then we steamed ahead faster. The ships ahead proved to be merchantmen, and at daylight we could discern the Spanish fleet further down the bay, and then it was 'Full ahead!' The Spanish fleet did not advance to meet us, and apparently made no move on the defensive Possibly our audacity had for the moment paralyzed them. But it was not for long. In twenty minutes or so they opened a terrific cannonading at long range. The batteries and

forts around Manila opened fire at the same time. Every man on the ship was now wide awake and at his post. I knew that it would not be long before there would be some hot work, and I served my men with a cup of coffee and a piece of hardtack, and a little later gave them each a drink of whisky and water.

"According to orders, we did not respond to the Spanish guns until our ships came into position. Then the flagship opened fire, and then I followed with two hours of cannonading which I do not believe has ever been equaled in naval warfare. The shots from the 'Olympia' were the prearranged signal for the other ships to do the same.

"We soon discovered that the batteries of Cavité were very heavily mounted, and the ordnance included several ten-inch guns, and we were not long in finding out that the 'Don Antonio de Ulloa' and the 'Reina Cristina,' the flagship, carried much heavier guns than we thought. We began to fear that our ships had met their match. As hot as the battle was, the heat of the sun was equally so, and I had my men who were bringing up the ammunition throw off every vestige of clothing except their shoes.

"The Spanish guns had opened upon us at 5.10 A. M., and it was fully 5.40 before we began to reply. But when we did, we made every shot tell, for our gunners demonstrated that their opponents were no match for them in accuracy, although the Spaniards had every advantage and should have known the exact range of every point in the harbor, while of the American fleet not a single gunner had ever as much as been in the harbor before.

"By 6.30 we had circled three times, and were starting for the fourth when the Spanish admiral came out in the 'Reina Cristina' and gallantly assailed us; but we made it hot for him. I don't know how in the world he escaped with his life. While he was standing on the bridge a shot from one of our ships—I think it was the 'Concord'—blew the bridge clean over; in fact, shot it right from under him, but the Admiral was apparently uninjured, for a few minutes later I saw him walking the deck as calmly as though he was on parade. It was getting too hot for him, and he evidently saw that his ship was no match for us, and he turned to get back to his fleet.

"Just as the 'Reina Cristina' swung around an eight-inch shell from the port battery, which I was tending, struck her square astern, and set her on fire. By this time other gunners had got the range, and if ever a ship was riddled it was the 'Reina Cristina.' I do not think it was fifteen minutes from the time the shell from the 'Boston' struck her when she went down with, it is said, over two hundred men. The Admiral, however, had escaped in a small boat and made for the 'Isla de Cuba,' where he again hoisted his flag.

"After we had circled five times we withdrew. The smoke was so dense that we could hardly distinguish friend from foe. Our men had worked three long hours with scarcely a mouthful of food. I had, however kept my men well supplied with whisky and water. I gave each a small drink about every twenty minutes.

"After we had withdrawn, and the clouds of smoke had lifted enough so that we could see, Admiral Dewey signaled the ships to report the number of killed and wounded. It would have done your heart good to have heard the shouts and cheers that went up as ship

after ship ran up the signal to indicate that she had no killed and none wounded worth reporting. It was one of the most thrilling moments of the entire battle.

"It was a wise move on Admiral Dewey's part in withdrawing at that moment, for our men were rapidly becoming exhausted. For my own part I do not think I could have held out another half hour, and neither could my men. We were not only wearied physically, but the nervous strain was something awful. I called my men into the gunroom and served each with a good stiff drink of whisky and told them to take all the rest they could get. I went into the chartroom, as it was about the coolest place on the ship, and threw myself on the chart table. I was too nervous to sleep and too exhausted to move. I just lay there sort of dazed.

"Soon after ten o'clock we advanced again, and the 'Baltimore' opened the fight. As many of the Spanish ships had been disabled, what we most feared now was the forts. The 'Baltimore' sailed right into the very teeth of the guns, any one of which could have annihilated her, and only bad marksmanship of the Spanish gunners saved her from destruction, and she did not retreat until she had practically silenced the fort.

"My ship, the 'Boston,' was perhaps struck oftener during the battle than any of the American ships, but in every instance it was small shot or shell, making a glancing blow that did no particular harm. After the first hour or so of the battle, if we had received a damaging shot, the chances are that we would have all gone down, for out of all the ship's boats, only two were of any value, the others having been shattered to pieces.

"We were circling in line with the other ships when the 'Isla de Cuba' swung around to give us a broadside. The guns in the port battery got the range on the 'Isla de Cuba,' and sent in a shot that struck in amidships and made her tremble from stem to stern. I was watching at the porthole at the time. The other guns of the 'Boston' followed the example of the port gunner, and for a few minutes it seemed that the 'Isla de Cuba' was crumbling to pieces like a falling building in an earthquake. We turned, and the starboard guns did equally good work, and when the Spanish flag came tumbling down we let out a yell that was heard around the world, figuratively speaking, if not literally.

"I can never forget the scene after the battle. The forts were smoking, and scattered all through the bay were the hulks of once magnificent Spanish ships. Some were drifting helplessly about, as though the men on board seemed not to know what to do and had lost their heads entirely. Rigging was trailing in the water and only remnants remained of the lifeboats. Over at one end of the bay was the wreck of the once magnificent 'Reina Cristina.' Further along were smoking hulks, and here and there could be seen only the masts and rigging above water.

"To add to the horror of the scene, hundreds of corpses came floating by, and it seemed as though the bay was full of dead Spaniards, although I believe less than a thousand were killed. I really think that the sight in the harbor that afternoon impressed men more with the horrors of war than did anything which occurred during the actual battle.

"During all the fight my men, except for a little while during the interval for breakfast, were stripped to the bare skin and wore only their shoes. The thermometer was over one

hundred, and to this was added the heat of the fire of the guns, until it made one's blood fairly boil."

The plan of action was for the fleet to revolve in a great circle or ellipse before the delivering their fire from starboard and port batteries alternately. The first shot from the "Olympia" was a 250-pound shell, aimed at the Cavité fort, and discharged with a shout from all hands, "Remember the Maine!" After two hours' fighting the fleet withdrew for breakfast, returning to action in about two hours, and after the Spanish surrender the little "Petrel" was sent in to destroy, by boats' crews, the ships in the inner harbor.

Commodore Dewey's official report of the action is a model of modesty and brevity. It came in these two cable messages:

MANILA, May 1.—Squadron arrived at Manila at daybreak this morning. Immediately engaged the enemy, and destroyed the following Spanish vessels: "Reina Cristina," "Castilla," "Don Antonio de Ulloa," "Isla de Luzon," "Isla de Cuba," "General Lezo," "Marquis de Duero," "Cano," "Velasco," "Isla de Mindanao," a transport, and water battery at Cavité. The squadron is uninjured, and only a few men are slightly wounded. Only means of telegraphing is to American Consul at Hong Kong. I shall communicate with him. DEWEY.

CAVITÉ, May 4.—I have taken possession of naval station at Cavité, on Philippine Islands. Have destroyed the fortifications at bay entrance, paroling the garrison. I control bay completely, and can take city at any time. The squadron is in excellent health and spirits. Spanish loss not fully known but very heavy. One hundred and fifty killed, including captain of "Reina Cristina." I am assisting in protecting Spanish sick and wounded; 250 sick and wounded in hospital within our lines. Much excitement at Manila. Will protect foreign residents. DEWEY.

It is little short of marvelous that no lives were lost on the American ships—though a month later Captain Gridley of the "Olympia" died from the effect of the concussion of his own guns. The vessels were handled with a daring amounting almost to bravado, yet so poor was the marksmanship of the Spaniards that little or no damage was suffered. It is to be kept in mind that, despite the disparity in the armament of the fleets, the Spanish works at Cavité mounted guns of twice the weight of any that Dewey's ships bore. Yet, when the action was over, the American vessels were practically uninjured, and perfectly capable of fulfilling the threat sent by

Admiral Dewey, that if another shot was fired he would lay Manila in ashes.

For months that threat alone kept order in Manila Bay. But at last the long-awaited troops, under command of Gen. Wesley Merritt, began arriving by transports. July 31st the Spaniards delivered a fierce attack upon the American forces ashore, but were repulsed. On August 13th, after—as we shall see in a later chapter—an armistice had been declared between Spain and the United States, Commodore Dewey, knowing nothing of the peace arrangements, bombarded the city. All the ships in the fleet joined in the bombardment, the Olympia leading. Under cover of this fire, which stilled the Spanish batteries, though it did little harm to the city, the United States troops pressed forward until the Spanish commander surrendered. Manila thereupon became the first outpost of the United States in Asiatic waters.

In the waters of the Gulf of Mexico and the Caribbean Sea, where it was expected the fighting would come first and be most decisive, the war lagged languidly for weeks. For a few days the jackies found some excitement and some hope of profit in capturing unsuspecting Spanish merchantmen, but soon the dull and deadly monotony of the peaceful blockade settled down upon the fleet, and Sampson's men grilled grimly under a blazing sun by day and slept uneasily by their guns at night, week after week, without a touch of battle to vary the dull round. Blockading is the most trying duty the blue-jacket has to discharge. Destitute wholly of glory, the element of danger is still ever present in a form which is particularly trying to the nerves. Every night brought danger of an attack by torpedo boats. These swift and sinister craft might at any time dart out of Havana harbor, discharge their fatal bolt, and send a good ship to the bottom as speedily as went the "Maine." That the Spaniards at no time even seriously attempted a torpedo-boat attack on the blockading squadron seems to reflect on their courage. But what they lacked apparently in courage they made up in shrewdness. For weeks the best efforts of our board of strategy and our board of naval intelligence were baffled by the mysterious movements of the Spanish fleet under Admiral Cervera. This squadron, which numbered among its vessels the powerful armored cruisers "Vizcaya," "Maria Teresa," Cristobal Colon," and "Almirante Oquendo,"

was reported now at the Canaries, then at Cadiz, then dashing through the Suez Canal to overwhelm Dewey at Manila, then off the coast of New England,—whereat Boston and Portland were mightily alarmed,—then bound South to capture or destroy the "Oregon,"—which was painfully making the voyage around Cape Horn,—then at Martinique, and, in short, at every conceivable point of menace. As a result of these conflicting reports, two American fleets were reduced to impotence. The "flying squadron" of fast cruisers under Commodore Schley was kept for weeks at moorings in Hampton Roads ready to be dispatched for protection of our northern coasts, while the squadron of battleships under Admiral Sampson was made to steam hither and yon in the Caribbean Sea looking for an enemy's fleet which much of the time lay snugly on the other side of the Atlantic. Accordingly, up to June 15, the results of naval operations in West Indian waters were almost *nil*. Powder had been burned indeed as when, on April 27, the Spanish works at Matanzas were bombarded and silenced by the "New York," "Puritan," and "Cincinnati," of Admiral Sampson's squadron, and on May 13 the works at San Juan, Porto Rico, were similarly tested. Deeds of conspicuous gallantry, too, were done, as when Ensign Worth Bagley lost his life while gallantly engaging Spanish gunboats and shore batteries with the torpedo boat "Winslow" at Cardenas. But these actions, though seized upon eagerly by a public hungry for war news, were inconclusive and trivial. The shore batteries were quickly repaired and strengthened, and the great object of capturing Havana seemed at the middle of June even further off than it had when war was declared.

Nevertheless, May and June saw a marked progress in the work of preparation for active hostilities. The army was mobilized and a great camp established at Tampa, Fla. Schley's flying squadron, finally relieved from apprehension as to the course of the Spanish fleet, left Hampton Roads to increase the naval strength in West Indian waters. The great battleship "Oregon," after a record-beating voyage around Cape Horn, in which her machinery met and withstood every imaginable strain, arrived at the rendezvous. And finally it was definitely learned that Admiral Cervera, with Spain's principal effective fleet, was actually in West Indian waters, and had entered the port of Santiago de Cuba for coal and repairs. There he was trapped by an exploit which has conferred new glory on the United

States Navy and has added a new name to the roster of dashing heroes like Somers and Cushing.

The harbor of Santiago de Cuba is one of the most easily defended in the world. Steep hills rise abruptly from either side of the harbor's mouth, which is scarce half a mile wide, with a channel so narrow that two vessels could scarcely pass in it. Into the brow of the hills are built batteries which, with plunging shot, command the entrance completely. An abrupt turn in the interior shore line makes the whole inner bay invisible from without, so for days the officers and men of the United States blockading fleet outside were ignorant whether Cervera's entire fleet was cooped up within. To send in a boat to make a reconnoissance would have been suicidal, for the channel, difficult at all times, was blocked by mines and torpedoes. For this reason, too, there could be no repetition of Dewey's exploit at Manila.

Accordingly, Admiral Sampson was confronted with a problem which seemed likely to tax the patience rather than the daring of his men. There seemed to be no opportunity for more exciting duty than a long blockade, unless the Spaniards should conclude to come out and fight—a most unlikely decision for them to reach. The forts, in all probability, could be reduced by the ships' cannon, but, even with that done, to enter the harbor in single file, so that the undisturbed fire of Cervera's fleet could be directed upon the Americans, ship by ship, as they entered the bay, would have been a most hazardous undertaking. The situation was not made more pleasing to the admiral by the fact that he was not sure of having all the Spanish ships in the trap. Some might not have entered Santiago, but might be at that very time devastating portions of the coast of the United States.

While the admiral was considering the problem thus presented to him, there appeared at his cabin a young lieutenant, Richmond P. Hobson, a graduate of the Naval Academy in 1889. The scientific side of naval duty had always chiefly attracted this young man. Graduating at the head of his class, he studied naval construction for two years in British dockyards. Above all things a student, a contributor to magazines, a delver into mathematical and structural problems, this young officer outlined to the admiral an exploit of reckless daring and volunteered himself to perform it.

It was folly, urged Hobson, to keep the entire American fleet watching

at the door to that harbor. The Spaniards, doing nothing and daring nothing themselves, were still reducing Admiral Sampson's powerful squadron to complete impotence. If the entrance to the harbor were obstructed one or two ships would serve to prevent the Spaniards from escaping, and the remainder of the American fleet would be released to take part in more vigorous warfare. By sinking a vessel, an old collier heavily laden, in the channel this could be accomplished, and Hobson volunteered to perform the feat. It was an invitation to almost certain death, for the fire of three batteries and part of the Spanish fleet, besides the explosion of the mines, must be braved before the narrow spot in which the ship was to be sunk could be reached. But Hobson thought he could do this, scuttle his ship, and escape with his men by swimming to a launch which should accompany him at a distance.

"Do you really expect to escape alive?" asked one of the officers as he outlined his project.

"Ah! that is another thing," replied the lieutenant. "I suppose the Estrella battery will fire down on us a bit, but the ships will throw their searchlights in the gunners' faces and they won't see much of us. Then, if we are torpedoed, we should even then be able to make the desired position in the channel. It won't be so easy to hit us, and I think the men should be able to swim to the dingey. I may jump before I am blown up, but I don't see that it makes much difference what I do. I have a fair chance of life either way. If our dingey gets shot to pieces, we shall then try to swim for the beach right under Morro Castle. We shall keep together at all hazards. Then we may be able to make our way alongside, and perhaps get back to the ship. We shall fight the sentries or a squad until the last, and we shall only surrender to overwhelming numbers."

The plan being approved by the admiral, volunteers were asked from the fleet, by signal, to accompany Hobson. Practically the whole fleet responded. One man was wanted from each ship, but on the "Brooklyn" 150 and on the "Texas" 140 pleaded to be taken. Finally these seven were selected:

Osborn Deignan, a coxswain of the "Merrimac"; George F. Phillips, a machinist of the "Merrimac"; John Kelly, a water-tender of the "Merrimac"; George Charette, a gunner's mate on the flagship "New York"; Daniel Montague, a seaman of the cruiser "Brooklyn"; J. C. Murphy,

a coxswain of the "Iowa"; Randolph Clausen, a coxswain of the "New York."

To man the launch which was detailed to follow the "Merrimac"—the ship chosen—four men and Naval Cadet Joseph W. Powell were taken. In the end they, too, proved to be heroes.

The steel steamer "Merrimac," loaded with 2,000 tons of coal, was then given to Hobson and prepared for sinking. An eye-witness, who followed the "Merrimac" as nearly as safety would permit, thus tells the story in the New York *Sun*:

"Cadet Powell and his crew saw the 'Merrimac' head straight for Estrella Point, which is on the east side of the harbor, back of the Morro. They knew that just before she reached that point the engines were to be stopped and the momentum allowed to carry her on. Then the flimsy wooden props holding the bonnets of her sea-valves in place were to be kicked aside, the helm put hard to starboard, and the starboard bower anchor let go. This would steer the ship directly across the channel and check her headway.

"At the same time seven reduced eight-inch charges, containing eighty pounds of brown powder in copper cases and protected by pitch from water, were to be set off separately. These charges were suspended about ten feet below the water-line at intervals of thirty feet, and connected by a series of dry batteries. As the ship steered across the channel the forward port powder charge was to be exploded. Then, as the stern swung into position, the anchor lashed on the starboard quarter was to be let go and the other six charges exploded in succession. A catamaran and lifeboat were slung aft on the starboard side ready for the seven men to drop into them.

"The crew in the steam launch watched the course of the old collier with eyes strained. The moon had sunk behind the horizon. It was 3.20 o'clock. On, on the heroes went. Lieutenant Hobson stood on the bridge of the old collier, dressed in full uniform. The other six men were at their posts, clad in tights, to aid their escape in case they had to swim a long distance.

"The watchers saw her head straight for Estrella Point, saw her swing hard across the channel, apparently undiscovered, heard five of the seven charges explode, and then began a screaming, flashing, death-dealing fire from the Spanish ships and batteries that hid the rest from view.

"The battery on Dead Man's Point, square in the center of the harbor, opened the fire and soon directed its guns against the launch. In the face of this hell, with ten- and twelve-inch guns blazing at them at this short range, Cadet Powell and the crew of his launch continued to search for the men of the 'Merrimac.'

"They saw then the guns of the 'Cristobal Colon,' Admiral Cervera's flagship, and of the old cruiser 'Reina Mercedes,' which had been considered gunless, trained on them and thundering in their ears.

NAVAL CONSTRUCTOR RICHMOND PEARSON HOBSON, WHO SANK THE MERRIMAC IN SANTIAGO HARBOR, JUNE 3, 1898.

"Still they searched with never as much as a faint cry for help or the sign of a single arm raised in mute appeal to guide them. Those on the battleship looking into the mouth of the harbor saw only a sheet of flame which, with the roar of the guns, lasted thirty-five minutes. By this time dawn had tinged the land and sky with light, and the tiny launch could be seen loitering by the shore. On the west side of the harbor, in the center of the channel, just where Hobson had promised to sink his vessel, could be seen the tops of the 'Merrimac's' masts. The harbor was blocked."

Hobson and his gallant men were not lost. A shot from one of the batteries destroyed the boat in which they had expected to reach the launch, but on a raft they escaped from their sinking vessel, only to be captured by the Spaniards. With sailor-like chivalry and hearty admiration for a gallant deed Admiral Cervera sent word to the fleet of their safety and offered to exchange them as soon as the necessary formalities could be complied with.

## CHAPTER III.

THE SPANISH FLEET MAKES A DASH FROM THE HARBOR—ITS TOTAL DESTRUCTION — ADMIRAL CERVERA A PRISONER — GREAT SPANISH LOSSES—AMERICAN FLEET LOSES BUT ONE MAN—SPAIN EXPELLED FROM THE WEST INDIES—THE RESTORATION OF PEACE.

WHEN the event was least expected the Spaniards made a desperate dash from the harbor, seeking freedom but finding only death.

July 3d the land forces of General Shafter were closing in on Santiago. There had been hard fighting for two days, in which both sides had shown dogged courage, but the Spaniards had been beaten back into the city, which the Americans almost completely invested. Though Shafter had but few heavy siege guns, many of the shells from his field artillery fell in the streets of the town and produced a panic there.

Admiral Cervera had landed some of his rapid-fire guns in aid of General Linares, and his marines fought with the Spanish soldiers. But as the American advance continued he saw that he would be caught in a trap and ground to pieces between Shafter and Sampson. So he made up his mind to the desperate chance of slipping out and trying to run past the American squadron.

At 9.30 on the morning of the 3d the lookout on the "Texas" saw smoke rising above Morro Castle. Immediately after, the black prow of a warship appeared in the channel coming out at full speed. It was the "Almirante Oquendo." Instantly the "Texas" broke out with bunting signaling to all the vessels of the fleet that the Spaniards were coming out. On every side rung out the bugles and clattered gongs calling the crews of the American ships to quarters. Admiral Sampson with the "New York" was far away, and Commodore Schley with the "Brooklyn" commanded the fleet. The odds were not so greatly in favor of the Americans, for the Spaniards had four armored cruisers and two torpedo-boat destroyers, while the Americans had five battleships, one armored cruiser and a yacht. The superiority of the Spaniards in rapid-fire guns was very great.

The "Brooklyn," thinly clad with armor, dashed first into the fray and was soon engaged with four armored vessels, each her superior; the "Iowa," "Texas" and "Oregon" rushed to her aid. It was soon apparent that the Spaniards were more intent on running than fighting. Nevertheless, they kept up a rapid fire, but showed the bad marksmanship which characterized Montojo s gunners at Manila. One shell from the "Oquendo" crashed through the pilot-house of the "Texas" just after Captain Philip had left it for the securer retreat of the conning tower, and one exploded in the smokestack. These were about the most effective shots aimed by the enemy.

A correspondent of the New York "Journal" and the "Sun" stationed aboard the "Texas" sent the most graphic account of the battle which has at this date, July 6, been printed. Some extracts from it will give a clear account of the fighting:

"Almost before the leading ship was clear of the shadow of Morro Castle the fight had begun. Admiral Cervera started it by a shell from the 'Almirante Oquendo,' to which he had transferred his flag. It struck none of the American vessels. In a twinkling the big guns of the 'Texas' belched forth their thunder, which was followed immediately by a heavy fire from our other ships. The Spaniards turned to the westward under full steam, pouring a constant fire on our ships, and evidently hoping to get away by their superior speed.

"The 'Texas,' still heading in shore, kept up a hot exchange of shots with the foremost ships, which gradually drew away to the westward under the shadow of the hills. The third of the Spanish vessels, the 'Vizcaya' or 'Infanta Maria Teresa,' was caught by the 'Texas' in good fighting range, and it was she that engaged the chief attention of the first battleship commissioned in the American Navy. The 'Texas' steamed west with her adversary, and as she could not catch her with speed she did with her shells.

"The din of the guns was so terrific that orders had to be yelled close to the messengers'

ears, and at times the smoke was so thick that absolutely nothing could be seen. Once or twice the 12-inch guns in the turrets were swung across the ship and fired. The concussion shook the great vessel as though she had been struck by a great ball, and everything movable was splintered. The men near the guns were thrown flat on their faces.

"Meanwhile the 'Oregon' had come in on the run. She passed the 'Texas' and chased after Commodore Schley, on the 'Brooklyn,' to head off the foremost of the Spanish ships. The 'Iowa' also turned her course westward, and kept up a hot fire on the running enemy.

"At 10.10 o'clock the third of the Spanish ships, the one that had been exchanging compliments with the 'Texas,' was seen to be on fire and a mighty cheer went up from our ships. The Spaniard headed for the shore and the 'Texas' turned her attention to the one following. The 'Brooklyn' and 'Oregon,' after a few parting shots, also left her contemptuously and made all steam and shell after the foremost two of the Spanish ships, the 'Almirante Oquendo' and the 'Cristobal Colon.'

"Just then the two torpedo-boat destroyers 'Pluton' and 'Furor' were discovered. They had come out after the cruisers without being seen, and were boldly heading west down the coast. 'All small guns on the torpedo boats' was the order on the 'Texas,' and in an instant a hail of shot was pouring all about them. A 6-pounder from the starboard battery of the 'Texas,' under Ensign Gise, struck the foremost torpedo boat fairly in the boiler.

"A rending sound was heard above the roar of battle. A great spout of black smoke shot up from that destroyer and she was out of commission. The 'Iowa,' which was coming up fast, threw a few complimentary shots at the second torpedo-boat destroyer and passed on. The little 'Gloucester,' formerly a yacht, then sailed in and finished the second boat."

The "Gloucester" of which the correspondent speaks was in command of Lieutenant-Commander Wainwright, who had been the executive officer of the "Maine." For two months after the disaster to that vessel Wainwright lived on a United States ship in the harbor of Havana, refusing to set foot on shore until he could go "with a landing party of marines." In his attack on the torpedo-boat destroyers—vastly superior to his craft in weight and armament—he threw prudence to the winds and fought with a fierceness bred of bitter hatred for the Dons. His was the most stirring display of personal courage shown on a day when all were brave.

To return to the correspondent's account:

"Gun for gun and shot for shot the running fight was kept up between the Spanish cruisers and the four American vessels. At 10.30 o'clock the 'Infanta Maria Teresa' and 'Vizcaya' were almost on the beach, and were evidently in distress. As the 'Texas' was firing at them a white flag was run up on the one nearest her. 'Cease firing,' called Captain Philip, and a moment later both the Spaniards were beached. Clouds of black smoke arose from each, and bright flashes of flame could be seen shining through the smoke. Boats were visible putting out from the cruisers to the shore. The 'Iowa' waited to see that the two warships were really out of the fight, and it did not take her

long to determine that they would never fight again. The 'Iowa' herself had suffered some very hard knocks.

"The 'Brooklyn,' 'Oregon' and 'Texas' pushed ahead after the 'Colon' and 'Almirante Oquendo,' which were now running the race of their lives along the coast. At 10.50 o'clock, when Admiral Cervera's flagship, the 'Almirante Oquendo,' suddenly headed in shore, she had the 'Brooklyn' and 'Oregon' abeam and the 'Texas' astern. The 'Brooklyn' and 'Oregon' pushed on after the 'Cristobal Colon,' which was making fine time and which looked as if she might escape, leaving the 'Texas' to finish the 'Almirante Oquendo.' This work did not take long. The Spanish ship was already burning. At 11.05 o'clock down came a yellow and red flag at her stern. Just as the 'Texas' got abeam of her she was shaken by a mighty explosion.

"The crew of the 'Texas' started to cheer. 'Don't cheer, because the poor devils are dying,' called Captain Philip, and the 'Texas' left the 'Almirante Oquendo' to her fate to join in the chase of the 'Cristobal Colon.'

"That ship in desperation was plowing the waters at a rate that caused the fast 'Brooklyn' trouble. The 'Oregon' made great speed for a battleship, and the 'Texas' made the effort of her life. Never since her trial trip had she made such time.

"The 'Brooklyn' might have proved a match to the 'Cristobal Colon' in speed, but she was not supposed to be her match in strength.

"It would never do to allow even one of the Spanish ships to get away. Straight into the west the strongest chase of modern times took place. The 'Brooklyn' headed the pursuers. She stood well out from the shore in order to try to cut off the 'Cristobal Colon' at a point jutting out into the sea far ahead. The 'Oregon' kept a middle course about a mile from the cruiser. The desperate Don ran close along the shore, and now and then he threw a shell of defiance. The old 'Texas' kept well up in the chase under forced draught for over two hours.

"The fleet Spaniard led the Americans a merry chase, but she had no chance. The 'Brooklyn' gradually forged ahead, so that the escape of the 'Cristobal Colon' was cut off at the point above mentioned. The 'Oregon' was abeam of the 'Colon' then, and the gallant Don gave it up.

"At 1.15 o'clock he headed for the shore, and five minutes later down came the Spanish flag. None of our ships was then within a mile of her, but her escape was cut off. The 'Texas,' 'Oregon' and 'Brooklyn' closed in on her and stopped their engines a few hundred yards away.

"Commodore Schley left the 'Brooklyn' in a small boat and went aboard the 'Cristobal Colon' and received the surrender. Meantime the 'New York,' with Admiral Sampson on board, and the 'Vixen' were coming up on the run. Commodore Schley signaled to Admiral Sampson: 'We have won a great victory; details will be communicated.'

"Then for an hour after the surrender in that little cove under the high hills was a general Fourth of July celebration, though a little premature. Our ships cheered one another, the captains indulged in compliments through the megaphones, and the 'Oregon' got out its band, and the strains of the 'Star-Spangled Banner' echoed over the lines of Spaniards drawn up on the deck of the last of the Spanish fleet, and up over the lofty green-tipped hills of the Cuban mountains.

"Commodore Schley, coming alongside the 'Texas' from the 'Cristobal Colon' in his gig, called out cheerily, 'It was a nice fight, Jack, wasn't it?'

"The veterans of the 'Texas' lined up and gave three hearty cheers and a tiger for their old commander-in-chief. Captain Philip called all hands to the quarter-deck, and, with bared head, thanked God for the almost bloodless victory.

"'I want to make public acknowledgment here,' he said, 'that I believe in God the Father Almighty. I want all you officers and men to lift your hats and from your hearts offer silent thanks to the Almighty.'

"All hats were off. There was a moment or two of absolute silence, and then the overwrought feelings of the ship's company relieved themselves in three hearty cheers for their beloved commander."

By this victory the naval power of Spain was effectively and finally crushed. She lost four fine armored ships and two large destroyers. In killed, wounded and prisoners her loss exceeded eighteen hundred men, while but one American was slain. Among the prisoners was Admiral Cervera, whose dignified bearing in the presence of disaster won for him the high regard of the Americans, his foes. The value of the property lost to bankrupt Spain exceeded thirteen million dollars.

It was quickly apparent to everybody except the Spaniards that the destruction of Cervera's fleet, and the consequent annihilation of Spain's sea power in this hemisphere, practically ended the war. Without ships Spain could in no way oppose the movements of our troops to any of her island possessions. Without ships, indeed, the defense of Santiago could not be maintained, and that important point, with its garrison of several thousand men, was surrendered within a week of the annihilation of Cervera. It was time indeed; for, the rainy season having set in, the sickness and mortality among the United States soldiers in the trenches reached a point which threatened the very existence of the army. As fast as possible the regiments which suffered most with the malarial plague were loaded upon transports and sent North, immune regiments being retained to garrison the captured city. Meanwhile, as though spurred on by success, the Administration at Washington made every effort to press the war with unremitting vigor. General Miles with an army of invasion landed in Porto Rico and marched into the interior of that rich and salubrious island, meeting scarcely a single check. The Spaniards seemed too disheartened to resist. And indeed at this very moment the Ministry at Madrid was preparing to make overtures of peace. Though a bold front was maintained, and the Cadiz squadron under Admiral Camara was sent into the Suez Canal as though to menace Dewey at Manila, the Spanish rulers nevertheless recognized the inevitable. Late in July they signified to the President, through the French Ambassador at Washington, M. Cambon, their willingness to consider peace proposals. An informal armistice followed, and at several points in the West Indies the United

States ships were stopped in the very midst of active battle by the news of the suspension of hostilities. The "Newark," for example, was bombarding Manzanillo when the news reached her commander. On the 12th of August the formal Protocol which ended hostilities was signed.

The war lasted one hundred and thirteen days, and was one of the most swiftly decisive struggles in history. By it Spanish naval power in the West Indies and on the Pacific was annihilated. As its inevitable result Spain will be expelled from the West Indies—left without a foothold in that New World which Columbus discovered by the aid of Spain's great monarchs, Ferdinand and Isabella. In the Pacific, too, Spain's power was crushed. The Ladrone and Caroline Islands were seized by United States ships as a mere incident of the advance on the Philippines. The flag which Dewey raised at Manila is there to stay. If, indeed, Spanish treachery was at the bottom of the disaster to the "Maine," the reparation has been full.

The United States has gained territory, but, most of all, its navy has won world-wide prestige. The speed and stoutness of our ships, the rapidity and precision of our gunnery, the vigilance and skill of our commanders, have been the admiration of the naval world. Our own people love the navy as never before in our national history. The home-coming of Admiral Sampson's battle-scarred fleet was made the occasion of such an ovation in New York Harbor as no squadron ever before enjoyed. Upon that glorious roster of naval heroes which begins with Paul Jones and includes Decatur, Hull and Farragut, are now inscribed the names of Dewey, Sampson and Schley, and one more war period in American history is ended with the complete demonstration that for the United States sea power is the assurance of safety.

Images

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